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SERMONS FROM THE LATINS.

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ADAPTED FROM BELLARMIN, SEGNERI,
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BY

REV. JAMES J. BAXTER, D.D.

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PREFACE.

In perusing these pages, it will be well to make and to bear in mind a distinction between the manner and the matter of the work. The manner, such as it is, belongs to the author, but, on the other hand, little or no attempt has been made at originality in doctrine or thought. In the seminary it was much insisted on that every priest, and more especially every young priest, should have continually beside him some suitable means wherewith to occupy his spare time. Accordingly, the study and the adaptation of that most excellent work the "Conciones Sacræ" of Cardinal Bellarmin, S.J., have been found in this instance a very pleasant and a very profitable employment. The first design was to translate the sermons verbatim, but, both on account of their extreme diffuseness and because, as originally written, they do not constitute a complete course for the year, that idea proved impracticable. From a study of the work as a whole, therefore, and out of the resulting mass of matter, a sermon for each

Sunday, and for a few of the principal festivals of the year has been evolved. Some extraneous thoughts, encountered in a course of desultory reading and drawn chiefly from Fr. Segneri, S.J., and Padre Agostino da Montefeltro, have been pressed into service to supplement the Cardinal's homilies. These latter have helped the present writer so often and so much in the routine of parish work that it is most earnestly hoped they may prove of assistance to others, and that this or any similar attempt, however humble, to bring out into the light these and the many other gems of Catholic thought and sentiment may meet with popular approval.

St. James' Church,
Boston, Mass.

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SERMONS FROM THE LATINS.

First Sunday of Advent.

Spiritual Awakening.

"Brethren, know that it is now the hour to rise from sleep." —Rom. xiii. 11.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Analysis of Epistle. I. Evil. II. Argument. III. Exhortation.

I. Evil: 1. Busy throng. 2. Various comparisons. 3. Nature's reminders.

II. Argument: 1. Morning. 2. Salvation nearer. 3. Advent and Christmas.

III. Exhortation: Victim of 1. Many mortal sins. 2. One mortal sin. 3. Venial sins.

Per.: Prayer regarding Christ's immediate and final coming.

SERMON.

Brethren, the Epistle of to-day's Mass is an admirable little sermon preached by St. Paul to the Romans. After showing them the evil he wishes them to correct, he proceeds to convince them with argument, and finally persuades them by a practical exhortation. The crying evil of those days, he says, —and I may add, the crying evil of to-day—is a forgetfulness of the main issue. "Brethren," he says, "it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep." The

sleep of the body is not nearer akin to bodily death than is the callous indifference of mankind about things spiritual, to the eternal death of their souls. As in natural sleep the eyes see not, and all our bodily members lie listless and dead—so in this spiritual sleep, this lethargy of the soul, the spiritual senses lie dormant; the eye of faith is closed and charity hath lost its strength, whereby we should be guided and moved to avoid evil and do good. And oh how true was then and how true is now the melancholy reflection of St. Paul when he sadly says: "and many there are who sleep." Many, indeed, not merely the souls shrouded in the night of Paganism; not merely those slumbering in the darkness of infidelity and heresy—but many Christians and Catholics, Catholics sunk in the deep sleep of mortal sin; Catholics given to the lighter slumbers of venial faults; in a word—Catholics, awake, alive to the duties of this world, but asleep, dead to the main issue, the salvation of their immortal souls. Sleeping Christians! dead Catholics! they are like the five foolish virgins in the Gospel, who, though faithful in starting out to meet the bridegroom, yet lacked the sustaining power of charity, and so slept and were late, and were driven away by their Lord in the words: "Amen, I know you not."

Some day when you are on Washington Street, stand and look at the crowd surging up and down. The world commends them as a very intelligent, industrious people. But what does God think of them? He says of them as He said of His chosen people of

old: "they have gone astray because there is not one of them who thinks—thinks of the one thing worth thinking about." The great heart of God as vainly yearns after them now as it did after the Israelites when He said: "Oh, that they would be wise and understand and provide for their last end." In all that throng is there one single thought of God or heaven, of religion or the soul? You hear every topic discussed but these, and if perchance you hear them mentioned at all, it is only one poor old beggar who begs an alms for God's sake and invokes the blessing of Heaven on the giver; or, more frequently, a blasphemer who asks Christ to damn his brother's soul for jostling him. Talk to them of death and judgment, heaven or hell, and, if they do you no bodily injury, be assured they will laugh at you as a fanatic and a madman. Tell them of the saints who gave up all to follow Christ; of the martyrs who were consistent enough to purchase, with their temporal lives, life eternal—and they will tell you that that doctrine was good enough for the Middle Ages—those thoughts suited to Sunday only; but that the week-day cares of this practical age are very different and vastly more important. There is a stringency in the money market, for example, and immediately the whole country is intensely interested; but the self-same people look on with unruffled calmness at the daily spread of infidelity and the hourly ravages of immorality. A few shiploads of gold are sent abroad, and soon return in answer to a universal cry of pro-

test, but though the gold of faith, the basis of religion, is fast dwindling away, scarce a single voice is raised in opposition. The lack of currency causes a widespread panic, but a falling off in the currency of good deeds—deeds of mercy and charity—though never more general or more direful, causes no concern to any but the starving poor. Men make wry faces at the files of bills that come in month after month and they strain every nerve to make ends meet, but they never reflect what would happen were God to hand down to each of us a monthly report, showing how much He paid out to us day by day and how little—the nothing—the worse than nothing—we did for Him in return! The debit and credit column of day-book and ledger are carefully told up and squared day by day and month by month and year by year,—but how hopelessly do the same men neglect their spiritual accounts—how recklessly do they rush into spiritual bankruptcy—and what a sorry tangle their accounts will present on the great reckoning day! Again, cholera or smallpox threatens the country and we move heaven and earth to keep it off; our children are sick, we send for the doctor and give medicine; a friend dies, we lift up our voice and weep; but the cholera of sin runs riot among us, and we let it pass quarantine, forgetting an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure; we dose our children's souls with the poison of bad example, and when our nearest and dearest dies by mortal sin, we shed never a tear. We take care to have our property and lives safely insured, but when

that great Spiritual Insurance Company—the Church —sends her agent to insure us for eternity, we either neglect or refuse, though the policy she offers is infinitely desirable, her reliability infallible, and the premium ridiculously small. There is something fairly ghastly in our indifference to the issue of the death and judgment that await us; as there is in the picture of a pleasure party on the St. Lawrence, carousing in their frail bark as it sweeps downward to the falls; or a criminal singing a ballad on his way to the gallows. If God were, in an instant, to petrify this age, and one man were left to go around and inspect the stony figures, how many, think you, would he find to have been engaged at the last moment in the service of the world, and how few in the service of God? The reason is because we are asleep to the main issue; we have forgotten the one thing to be remembered. And our folly is without excuse. For, as surely as the sun rises and sets, so sure are we that the evening of time is coming, and thereafter the dawn of eternity. The dreary rain prefigures the tears to be shed over us; the snow that mantles blighted Nature reminds us of the shroud that awaits us and the decay that is our common lot. When the thunder booms we seem to hear the angel's trumpet calling the dead to judgment, and in the lightning's flash, which cometh out of the east and appeareth even unto the west, we are reminded of the coming of the Son of man. In the midst of life there is death; the grave is dug by the cradle's side, and the mother's lullaby is but the prelude to the

funeral dirge. And when life shall have merged into death, time into eternity, then, as the Scripture says: "The worldlings shall have slept their sleep and awakening shall find nothing in their hands." Then looking at those who, while here, were dead to the world but awake to God and the best interests of their souls, the worldlings shall say: "These are they whom we had sometime in derision and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness and their end without honor, and, behold, now they are numbered among the children of God."

Brethren, if the householder only knew when the thief would come, he would sit up and prevent his house being robbed. We know that the Lord will come like a thief in the night—surely come, but when, we know not; and blessed is that servant whom He shall find watching. Therefore, St. Paul's first reason for our spiritual awakening is, that being vigilant in time, we may provide for our last end, lest awakening only in eternity we find the folly of our lives irreparable. "Now is the hour for rising," he says, "now is the day of salvation." Our age, the Christian era, is as it were the morning of God's own day—midway between the night of infidelity that preceded it, and the full noontime of the beatific vision that is to come. "Before Christ," as Isaias says, "darkness covered the earth and a shadow over the people," so that they saw and knew little or nothing of God's transcendent glory. The blessed in heaven, on the other hand, see God as He is in the full noonday of His splendor; while we, by the aurora of Chris-

tian truth, as St. Paul says, see God in part only but hereafter face to face. Our time, therefore, is the morning, the time to rise from sleep. For all of us the night is past, and for many or all the day is at hand. We should awake, therefore, spiritually, and even as the aurora develops into the brightness and warmth of the perfect day, so should we advance from one light of virtue to another, from fervor to fervor, until we arrive even at the everlasting day of God's heavenly presence. Worldly Christians and bad Catholics, on the contrary, go down from the twilight, from darkness to darkness, until they are finally swallowed up in the everlasting darkness of hell. "The path of the just," says Solomon, "is like a radiant dawn that advances and increases to a perfect day, but the way of the wicked is dark and its end unknown."

His second reason for our spiritual awakening, St. Paul takes from the nearness of the end: "For now," he says, "our salvation is nearer than when we believed." Before Christ's coming, belief in the future Messias was the key to salvation, but it was only hundreds and thousands of years after their death that heaven was opened to the patriarchal saints of God. Now, however, it is but a step from life through death into eternity, so that the world's salvation, now that it has seen Christ, is nearer than when men merely believed in His coming. And hence, just as the aerolite falls the faster the nearer it approaches its resting place on the earth; as the racer makes his supreme effort on the home stretch; as the

eleven struggle all the more fiercely the nearer they come to their goal; so we, seeing the goal of our lives, our salvation, so much nearer and clearer, should be the more eager and vigilant in its attainment.

To these reasons of St. Paul for our spiritual awakening, I would venture to add a third. To-day is the first day—the dawn of the Ecclesiastical Year. To-day we begin to prepare for Christ's spiritual coming at Christmas. Now is the hour for us to rise from the sleep of sin, and relight the lamp of God's grace in our souls and lovingly keep vigil against the coming of Our Lord. As at His first coming the tidings of great joy were told only to the watching shepherds, and the star of hope shone only on the wakeful seers; so now none but those vigilant in the service of God can realize the full benefit of Christ's spiritual coming. Never was this call to awake more appropriate, or neglect of it more culpable, than now. As the brightness and heat of the sun grow less age by age, so does faith grow dim and charity lose its ardor, and our souls, like ice-bound explorers benumbed with cold, sink into the fatal sleep of death. Hence, we are inclined even more than the people of St. Paul's time, to forget God in our devotion to the world, the flesh, and the devil. And our folly is more guilty than theirs. For, in the beginning of time and of Christianity, men did not know the world as they know it now; they had not, like us, a past history from which to learn its hollowness, nor had they, as we, learned from bitter personal experience that it is all vanity of vanities, and gives naught to its votaries

but vexation of spirit. In the beginning, man's animal passions were as a mighty fire just sprung and raging fiercely, but God subdued them by the waters of the Deluge and tempered them still more since by the waters of Baptism. The devil's powers, too, have been curtailed since the woman Mary crushed the serpent's head, and her divine Son placed at our disposal the means of repelling him. In fine, the way to heaven has been made so smooth by the feet of innumerable saints; so easily traced, deeply dyed as it is with the blood of Christ and the martyrs; and the end has been shown so clear to our view, that the wonder is how, *how* we can possibly stray from that path; how we can have a single thought but for God and the soul; a single aspiration but one—to "dwell all our days in the house of the Lord."

Brethren, know that it is now the hour for us to rise from the sleep of sin—now, next week, this Advent. And first, you poor soul given to many and serious habits of sin, in God's name cast off now the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Walk honestly, as in the day; thinking nothing, desiring nothing, saying or doing nothing you would be ashamed to exhibit to the world in broad daylight. Free your soul, for good and all, from those sins of drunkenness and impurity, contention and envy. Make it so pure against the coming of your Lord that it will not quail even before the search-light of God's omniscience. In short, in the words of St. Paul, strip yourselves of the old man with his deeds and put on the new; viz., the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, you

who are given to the habit of only one mortal sin—oh, remember! that as it is not necessary to have all diseases to die, so neither must one be wholly bad to be condemned. One tag on an article will bring it to its destination, and sin is the label of the soul expressed to hell,—the label nothing can remove but the blood of Jesus Christ. And lastly, you who are given only to venial faults—oh beware! Like St. Peter you follow Christ—but afar off. Take care lest your next act be to deny your Lord. Because you are neither hot nor cold, the Lord will spit you out of His mouth as a loathsome thing, not to be taken back without an effort, without disgust. While the clouds of God's wrath are gathering above you, you, because of your one or two good qualities, send up the lightning-rod of self-conceit and feel perfectly secure. Your danger is greater than that of the out and out sinner; for often the very enormity of a sin will drive the sinner up to the highest virtue, while the mediocre remain in their mediocrity, thus verifying Our Lord's words "that the first shall be last and the last first."

Brethren, may we, one and all, spend the Advent so awake to our most important duties as to merit to receive Christ worthily at Christmas; and may we spend our lives so vigilant in God's service that, at His final coming, we may be among His blessed servants whom He shall find watching.

Second Sunday of Advent.

Faith and Miracles.

"*Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me.*"—Matt. xi. 6.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Grounds. II. Examples. III. Rewards of Faith.
I. Grounds: 1. Multitude. 2. Magnitude. 3. Manner and variety of Christ's miracles.
II. Examples: John's 1. Hidden life. 2. Public life. 3. Passion and death.
III. Rewards: Similar to those of John.
Per.: The least in heaven greater than John.

SERMON.

Brethren, an ancient tradition has it, that of the two disciples sent to Jesus by John, one was a Jew and the other a converted Gentile. They were, therefore, a representative committee of two on behalf of the whole human race, Jews and Gentiles alike, destined to bear ocular evidence to the fact that Jesus was in very truth the long-promised Messias, the Saviour of the world, the Son of the living God. Consequently, through them Christ in to-day's Gospel preaches to us and to all a little sermon on the grounds and the examples and the rewards of faith in His divinity. Stiff-necked and slow to believe as we are, Christ gives us proof of His Godhead suited to our capacity in the multitude and variety and magnitude of His miracles. But faith begot of signs and wonders is not the faith He craves, and, hence, secondly, He points out to us John the Baptist whom He styles "the greatest born of

woman," aye, a very angel, because without the carnal realism of miracles, John was quick to recognize the Lamb of God and, through the storms and disappointments of his brief and tragic life, clung to Him with unwavering fidelity. Lastly, for all who imitate John's constancy in faith no human vicissitudes can change, Christ declares the reward in those words aptly styled the ninth beatitude: "Blessed are they that shall not be scandalized in Me."

Brethren, no assertion proven by a miracle can possibly be false, provided it be a genuine and true miracle. I say genuine and true, for there are miracles that are not really such, but deserve rather to be called wonders. As Shakespeare says, there are many things in heaven and earth not dreamt of in our philosophy—many occult powers of Nature, which, when called into play by divine permission or by Satanic agency, popularly pass for miracles. By such-like prodigies mere men are frequently deceived, but angels and devils, with their keener insight into Nature, know them to be false. They are phenomena of Nature, that spring from hidden causes, and without divine consent could never be evoked. Such was the calling down from heaven, by Satan's power, of fire upon the flocks and shepherds of holy Job, and the changing of the rods into dragons by the Egyptian seers. Such, too, are the undeniable prodigies often wrought by modern magicians, and such will be the arts wherewith, at the end of time, Antichrist will try to deceive even the elect. God, for His own wise purposes, deigns to permit such

things, false though they be, and doubly false since claiming falsely to be miracles and used to prop up falsehood. But it is of the very essence of a true miracle that the performing of it fall within the power of God alone. Not only to men, but to devils and angels as well, does a true miracle bring wonder and amaze, for the cause thereof lies not in Nature but in God alone. Since, therefore, God can neither deceive nor be deceived, and since the working of true miracles is His exclusive prerogative, whatever assertion He confirms with a real miracle must essentially be true. See, then, what proof we have of His divinity. "Go," He says, "and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear and the dead rise again." And not alone those seen by John's two disciples, not alone those recorded in the Gospels, but such numberless others, says St. John the Evangelist, that were they each recorded and described not the world itself would hold the books they would fill. They are as countless as the stars of heaven, and the glory of them outshines those of all the saints as does the noonday sun the other luminaries. It was Christ's strongest indictment against the Jews that having done works such as no man ever did before, they still rejected Him. His very enemies confessed His power, for while refusing to believe Him the Messias, they were secretly whispering one to the other: "When Christ really comes, will He, think you, do greater miracles than these?"

After their multitude, the next strongest argument for Christ's divinity is their magnitude. "Such works I do," says He, "as no man ever did before . . ." and we may add, or since. True, Christ promised that whosoever believed in Him would have the power to work equal and even greater prodigies than He, but we must not forget that whatever is accomplished by God's servants in the way of miracles is really done by power not theirs but Christ's. Christ taught this when He said: "I go to the Father and whatever you ask in My name that I will do," and Peter and John showed how well they had learned when they declared to the Jews that not by their power, but in the name of Jesus, had they cured the infirm man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. Besides, Christ calls the effects of apostolic ministry greater miracles than His to show that the conversion and the cleansing of a soul from sin is a greater miracle than the raising of the dead to life.

Again the manner of Christ's miracles distinguishes them from miracles of saints and further proves Him God, for they by prayer and fasting accomplished gradually their results, but Christ not so, but instantly and by His sole command. The variety of His miracles, too, attests the self-same truth of His divinity, for in every creature of the universe, animate and inanimate, He showed His almighty power. Of inanimate objects the star led to His birthplace, and the sun was darkened at His death; the loaves were multiplied; the water saw its Lord

and blushed; He trod upon the waves and stilled the winds and seas. Of animate objects, the fig-tree withered at His touch and the fishes filled the net; He cured the humanly incurable ills of flesh; He raised the dead to life; He drove the demons from their writhing victims and angels came and ministered to Him. Were Christ a mere impostor and God permitted Him to do the prodigies He did, the imposition and deception would be attributable primarily to God, which is absurd and blasphemous. True, many unworthy men have had the power of miracles, but the reason it was given them was that they exercised it not to glorify themselves, which would be to deceive, but for the glory of God. These are they who, as the Gospel says, will at the Last Judgment try to justify themselves, saying: "Lord, Lord, did we not do miracles in Thy name?" and whom He shall answer thus: "Amen, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity." Their power proved God's holiness, not theirs. But miracles permitted or wrought by God to prove directly man's sanctity or God's divinity are necessarily infallible arguments. With reason, then, could Christ turn to the Jews and say: "If you believe not in My divinity on the testimony of My words, believe at least My works."

Brethren, here, naturally, recur to our minds those other words of Our Lord: "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed." Blessed John the Baptist is, after the Blessed Virgin herself, the most illustrious example of perfect faith in Christ, and as

such he is held up to us by Our Saviour in to-day's Gospel. There are, I confess, few personages in history that appeal to me so strongly as John the Baptist. Like all great reformers he was a man of one idea. From the moment of his birth—aye from that day when at the approach of the unborn Saviour he leaped for joy in his mother's womb, the one overmastering principle of his life was to prepare the way of the Lord, to point out to the world the Lamb of God, its Redeemer. This is the key to the mystery of his life. All his other thoughts were so absorbed in this one that his time not having yet come and having nothing else in life to accomplish, he, while yet a boy, fled from home and his aged parents and sought communion with God in the wilderness. What a strange wild life his was for long years, and how picturesque! He is the companion of wild beasts; his garb of skins, his girdle of leather, and his food of locusts and wild honey. Talk of vocation for the priesthood, and sacrificing all to follow Christ, but did ever other minister of Christ follow the promptings of the spirit as fully and as faithfully as did the Baptist? And when at length the time was ripe and the kingdom of God was at hand, how earnestly he threw himself into the work of preparing the way of the Lord, levelling the hills by his fierce denunciation of the empty externalism of the proud Scribes and Pharisees, filling up the valleys by his kindly bearing towards the despised publicans, his consoling words of counsel to the soldiers, and his promises of better things to come; making

the crooked way straight by his baptism of repentance and the rough ways plain by his touching appeals to all! No wonder people flocked by the thousands to hear him, no wonder they loved him. God bless the people for it now, as then, for let a man but throw himself into a work body and soul and with true sincerity, and straightway he finds the people at his back. At last for John came that great day when he and Jesus met, and instantly he cried: "Behold the Lamb of God!" No need of miracles to rouse his faith; rather it was his faith that cleft the heavens and brought the Spirit and the voice proclaiming Christ to be the Son of God. John's work was done; thenceforth he must decrease and Christ increase. But before retiring from the scene he fearlessly denounced the incestuous union of Herod with his brother Philip's wife. A dungeon in the strongest fortress of Judea was soon John's home, and there took place his passion—the trial of his faith. Born and bred a Jew, he doubtless looked as all Jews did for a conquering Messias—one who should establish one kingdom, the kingdom of God on earth forever. Yet what a disappointment! Here was he, a prisoner, seemingly abandoned by the man he himself had called the Son of God; half his disciples deserted to the Nazarene, the other half reporting daily that Christ was either fleeing from His enemies, outraging the sacred laws of the Sabbath, and of handwashing, or consorting with the wicked and feasting with the publicans and sinners—John's enemies. Was this the man for whom he (John) had

sacrificed so much? Was this the Christ of God? What weight such thoughts would have with you and me were we behind John's prison bars! But not so John. His faith was founded not on signs and wonders but on the words of God, and naught but God's own word in contradiction could ever shake his trust. He sent his two disciples, not to question Christ for his own instruction but for theirs—and his very sending of them, his sublime confidence in the ability of Christ to give them an answer, satisfactory and essentially true, proves the depth and height of John the Baptist's faith. Hence it was that Christ commended him, his austere self-denial and firm constancy amid seeming contradictions. No reed was he, shaken by every wind of circumstance. Little cared he for worldly ease and preferment, yet was he greater than the greatest — more than a prophet—because more deeply imbued with the spirit of God—an angel, because he came from God and lightly touched the earth and flew to heaven again. As in his dungeon he bends his neck to the executioner's axe, John is a sublime figure of faith and hope and love—of faith, for he believed when doubt would have triumphed in most men—of hope, for he trusted when it seemed hope had fled—of charity, for he gave the highest proof of love by giving his life for his friend.

Brethren, great as was the Baptist, still Christ asserts that the least in the kingdom of God—the Catholic Church—can become greater still. John was of the Old Law, but we are of the New, with all its superior advantages and graces. Now, to best

achieve our glorious possibilities we must first of all grasp firmly such fundamental truths of faith as Christ's divinity, and try to realize the overwhelming force of arguments such as His wondrous miracles. The human mind, if anything, is logical, and given first principles, it is sure to draw a practical conclusion; but from ignorance of fundamental truths result irreligion, indifferentism, and lukewarm Catholics. And after the foundation comes the superstructure, a life as like as may be that of John. To see one's duty and to do it come what may; to realize the importance of salvation and subordinate all other thoughts to that; to recognize the duty of preparing the Lord's way and leading others to Him by word and golden example; to cling fast to the Church in word and deed, believing her divine whatever scandal stain her human side; to do all this and to persevere unto death is to carry out Our Lord's instructions; is to imitate the Baptist; is to be an ideal Christian.

Immaculate Conception.

MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN.

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women."—Luke i. 28.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Satolli. II. Mary's place in Redemption. III. Her blessedness.
I. 1. Protestant testimony and woman's sphere. 2. Exceptions. 3. Mary's prototypes.
II. 1. John's vision. 2. Doctrine of original sin and its transmission. 3. Solitary exception.
III. Proofs of dogma: 1. New Adam. 2. Ave and Eva. 3. Canticle of Canticles.
Per.: 1. Protestant and Catholic. 2. Married, single; rich, poor. 3. Sodality.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, I remember long ago at school how the Professor, then Monsignor, now Cardinal Satolli—the Professor, I say, was wont to preface his every lecture with a simple invocation—a single Hail Mary. When asked why he never chose a longer or better prayer he replied that he knew none better or more appropriate. "For," said he, "as Mary, after the annunciation of the Angel Gabriel, conceived and bore the Saviour of mankind, so I pray that God may give me the eloquence of an angel to announce to you the word of God, that your souls may conceive of the Holy Ghost and bring forth salvation unto many." And in fact, the work of our Redemption—Christianity in its final analysis—must always bring

us back to Mary. She was the first gentle flower to bloom forth in the springtime of the new era—that wondrous plant that bore her fruit in motherhood but still retained the blossom of her virginity. The name "Mary" is interpreted as the "bitterness of the sea," but the bitterness of her life was all her own: to us she became the star of the sea, leading us on to our glorious destination. "All generations," she says, "shall call me blessed." Twice blessed rather, for virginity and fruitful maternity are woman's greatest blessings, and Mary, the virginal Mother of the Man of men, became in the birth of her first-born the spiritual Mother of us all. Such a singular combination of prerogatives simply defies exaggeration. No eulogist of her, however perfect, but can say: "Condescend to hear my praises, O sacred Virgin, and give me strength against thy enemies."

Though Protestants, as such, never will and never can understand this devotion, still it was only the other day one of them said that woman need never hope to achieve her proper position in society until the Christian world unites in honoring Mary as she deserves. For it is a truth proven by human experience since the very beginning of humanity, that in the conduct of this world's affairs, be they social, political, or religious, woman's part must ever be an inferior one, secondary and subordinate to that of man. That such was and is Nature's intent is evidenced in the purely animal kingdom, where the distinctive characteristics of the sexes, their different organisms and duties, all proclaim the preeminence of the sterner

sex and the consequent dependence of the weaker. Man, too, half animal, half spirit as he is, verifies in himself this universal law. His body mirrors Nature as faithfully as his soul reflects the image of God. But besides her bodily inaptitude, there is in woman's character a certain lack of force—a certain narrowness of mind and natural timidity—which, though in her legitimate sphere they be her fairest ornaments, must still ever render her unfit for the sterner duties of life. The demon tempter of our first parents by his artful methods betrayed his keen insight into woman's instability, for not directly but through woman's weakness was he enabled to accomplish the fall of man. Even the Creator Himself gives testimony of this truth. Having told in the first chapter of Genesis of man's creation as lord of the earth, He in the second chapter, and as it were, by an afterthought adds: "It is not good for man to be alone. Let us make for him a companion and helpmeet."

Nevertheless there is no rule without its exceptions. Not to mention the living examples in modern society, we find in the pages of history conspicuous instances of women, eminent in every branch of human activity—in literature, in the arts and sciences, in the council-chamber, on the throne, and even on the battlefield. The lives of such women as St. Catherine of Alexandria, of Queen Isabella of Spain, of Queen Catherine the Great of Russia, and of the immortal Maid of Orleans, all go to prove, if proof were necessary, how true it is that God frequently chooses the weak things of this world to conquer the strong.

Going back further still, we find the same exception proving the same rule. In the history of God's chosen people special mention is made of five women who, at different times, were the joy and the crown of their age: Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron, who led the Israelites through the Red Sea, chanting the while her magnificat to the Lord; Abigail, the wife of Nabal, David's enemy, whose eloquence and beauty so touched the king's heart that he spared her husband and her people, and styled her blessed among women; Ruth, whom filial devotion led far from home and fatherland, and whose faithfulness finally gained for her first place in her master's love and house; Judith, who having slain Holofernes, the scourge of her people, was styled by them "the Glory of Jerusalem, the Joy of Israel;" and finally Anna, the mother of Samuel,—Samuel whom she wrung from God by prayers and tears, only to return him magnanimously to the Lord. Now it is a singular fact, providential surely, that the initial letters of these five names—Mary, Abigail, Ruth, Judith and Anna, taken in order spell the name Maria; spell the name of her in whom were focused all the virtues of those that preceded her and those that followed; who was second only to the Man-God. If a greater than John the Baptist was never born of woman in the Old Law, surely, with the single exception of Christ, a greater than Mary was never born of woman in the New. The painter Zeuxis, we are told, depicted his ideal woman by copying the various graces of many models into one figure, and ancient mythology

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has it that each divinity lent a charm to grace the Queen of Love. A myth, yes, but a myth founded on a fact—on Mary's creation. She is that Ruth whose loving heart recked not of home or country but only of her people and her Lord; she is that Judith who slew man's bitterest foe when she crushed the head of the serpent; she is that Abigail by whose eloquent beauty the wrath of the King of kings was turned to mercy. The Child of her prayers she gave, like Anna, freely to the Lord; but most of all she is that Mary who alone of mortals passed through the sea of this sinful world dry-shod and without a stain. Man may say that but for Eve Adam had never sinned; he may point to his sex deified in the person of the Saviour; but still, speaking of the purely mortal, we can and do turn to-night to a woman, to Mary, and salute her in the words of the poet as: "Our tainted Nature's solitary boast."

Brethren, in the Apocalypse Mary is described as the Woman clothed with the sun of God's effulgent grace, the moon—the changeful moon—under her feet, and on her head a crown of stars—the brightest star of them all her Immaculate Conception. Alone of mortals, she, from the instant of her creation, was preserved from the stain of original sin. We read that the prophet Jeremias and John the Baptist were sanctified in their mother's womb, but still each was created, each conceived, in sin. In fact, with Mary as a solitary exception, every child of Adam is heir to Adam's guilt. In the beginning God made man right, says Ecclesiasticus, right with the rectitude

of order—his soul and its higher powers subject to God, his lower nature subject to his reason and will, and the whole visible universe subject to the composite man. The world was then an earthly paradise, no labor, no want, no affliction from without, no misery from within, but happiness and immortality here, and the assured vision of God hereafter. But man, like the angels, was tried, and man, like the angels, fell. The angels sought equality with God in power, and man, equally guilty, sought equality with God in knowledge. And as in their case so in other and all cases: self-exaltation ended in humiliation, for God anathematized man and freed his subjects from their allegiance to him. "Cursed be the earth," He said, "thorns and thistles will it bear thee. Thou shalt labor and toil all the days of thy life, and as dust thou art, so unto dust thou shalt return." Original sin, with its effects, was the complete subversion of the primitive harmony established between God and man, between man's higher and lower natures, and between man and the world; and this sin and its effects we all inherit. "Behold," says the Psalmist, "I was conceived in iniquities, and in sin did my mother conceive me." And St. Paul adds, "as by one man sin entered this world, and by sin death; so death hath passed upon all men from him in whom all men have sinned." As the wages of sin is death, and as all men die, we must naturally conclude that all men are conceived children of wrath in original sin. It stains the unborn, and the newly-born; it stains man in whatever stage of unbaptized existence

he may be, for only sin excludes from happiness, and Christ has said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can never enter the kingdom of heaven." The Church attests this fundamental dogma by celebrating the feasts of the saints, not on the day when in sin they came into this world, but on the day of their death, when, sinless, they passed to glory. St. Jerome discourages inquiry as to how original sin is transmitted, saying: "It is as though one fallen overboard were asked 'How came you there?' and should reply, 'Ask not how I came here, but seek rather how you may get me out.'" Anyhow, our natures were corrupted in Adam and Eve as waters in their source, with this difference, that human nature is not purified in transmission. As the different members of my body may become guilty of crime, though not acting by their own volition but under the influence of my perverse will, so we, as we are of the great body of humanity, contract the guilt of a sin of which the head alone was guilty. Adam and Eve were a representative committee of two, chosen from the myriads of human possibilities. Theirs was a test case; their fate our fate; so that we all share in their sin and punishment as we should have shared in their happiness had they remained faithful to God. One single exception is recorded—the Virgin Mary. Of her alone we can say with the Canticle: "All beautiful art thou and there is no stain in thee." In St. John's vision of her, the moon under her feet denotes the absence in her of all stain or change—denotes her to be as Longfellow styles

her: "The peerless queen of air, who as sandals to her feet, the silver moon doth wear."

Brethren, for us Catholics, the ultimate proof that Mary was immaculately conceived must ever be the fact that for centuries this truth was accepted by the entire Catholic world, and defined at last as an article of our faith by Pius IX. in 1854. Nor are we without reasons for the faith that is in us. This privilege of Mary was foreshadowed in the words of God to the demon-seducer of our first parents: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed, and she shall crush thy head." We can readily understand the enmity between Mary's Son and Satan, but that Mary herself should, as promised, vanquish the serpent, is explainable only on the theory that she was never for an instant subject to him by sin, that she was immaculately conceived. Jesus and Mary were prefigured in Adam and Eve—they are as like as the light of to-day and to-morrow, and yet they differ as the waning twilight from the coming dawn. Adam's hands, outstretched toward the forbidden fruit, point to death and darkness; the hands of Christ in Gethsemani, receiving from the angel the chalice of His sufferings, point to life and light: and it was not until the water from the side of Christ on the cross trickled down on Adam's skull that life met death in Baptism. Adam was made of immaculate earth, as yet uncursed—a true figure of the stainless Virgin who was to conceive and bear the Saviour. "Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord," says the Psalmist; and Mary's body was the house of the

Lord; the material from which He built Him an earthly habitation. Christ was the wisdom of the Father, and Holy Writ has it that "wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul nor dwell in a body subject to sin." To deny the Immaculate Conception of Mary is, to my mind, scarcely less blasphemous than to assert that the humanity of Christ Himself was stained with original sin, for did He not become flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone? And who does not recoil in horror from the thought that even the adorable body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the altar should have had its origin in anything defiled by sin? The Immaculate Conception of Mary is a necessary corollary of Christ's absolute sinlessness. It was asserted by John the Baptist when he refused to baptize the Saviour in the Jordan. It was asserted by Christ Himself when He demanded of His enemies: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin? And what fellowship is there of God with Belial?"

But apart from her divine Son, Mary in the Scripture vindicates in her own person this article of our faith. Mary's destiny was to undo what Eve had done, and whatever in the order of grace Eve lost, Mary regained. Mary is the direct antithesis of Eve. Ave—Eva—even their very names are an inversion, the one of the other. It was due to God's dignity and power that His fair creation should be restored by exactly the same means wherewith by the demon it had been destroyed. Eve sprang from Adam and became his mother in error and death; Mary sprang

from God and became the Mother of the Man-God —the truth and the life. Eve consented to the prince of darkness, but it was to an angel Mary said: "Be it done unto me according to thy word." Mary brought forth her Son without loss of virginity and without pain, whereas had she ever even for an instant been the subject of original sin, God's words would have been verified of her as of every daughter of Eve: "I will multiply thy sorrows and in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." Eve came to fill the world with the thorns and thistles of human afflictions, but the Canticle, speaking of Mary's conception, says: "The winter is now past, the rain is over and gone, and the flowers have appeared in our land." She is the flower of the field and the lily of the valley. "As the lily among the thorns," says the Canticle, "so is Mary among the daughters of Eve." She is the fleece of Gedeon, bathed in the heavenly dew, while all around was parched with the breath of hell. Upon Mary, says the Psalmist, grace came down as the dew upon the fleece, and from her it spread broadcast, and was increased by the preaching of the Apostles and their successors, until it became as showers gently falling upon all the land, for their sound hath gone forth into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world. She is the ark of Noe unsubmerged by the universal deluge of sin; alone on the world of waters, a solitary refuge for the remnant of mankind.

Brethren, there is one more text of Scripture from many that might be adduced concerning the Immac-

ulate Conception. In the sixth Canticle we read: "Who is she that cometh forth as the dawn; fair as the moon, bright as the sun; terrible as an army set in array?" All the beauties of Nature, of the day, of the night, and of the intervening time—the aurora—are here attributed to Mary. She came as the dawn, pure and sweet, with the promise of a glorious day. St. Francis of Assisi loved to meditate gazing on the rising sun: "For," said he, "with the eye of faith I can see therein the dawn of man's Redemption." It was another and beautiful way of saying he loved to meditate on Mary's Immaculate Conception. Fair as the moon. In all Nature there is nothing lovelier than the pale queen of night, as with stately tread she ascends the throne of heaven, while the stars like flowers strew her royal way. She shines with a borrowed light, 'tis true, as Mary did, but still star differs from star in glory, and Mary is the brightest of them all. And lest we should imagine that like the moon there is any spot or change in her, the Canticle adds that Mary is bright as the sun. One and the same halo surrounds Mary and the Child in her arms. If a brief vision of God on Mount Sinai made the face of Moses shine like the sun, what shall we say of Mary, who for thirty long years basked in the smiles of the Saviour? Through her the light of divine truth and the warmth of divine love suffused this world, thawing out the congealed heart of the sinner and starting up the rivulets of human sympathy. Finally, to the powers of darkness she is terrible as an army set in array. As the shadows of night fly westward in con-

fusion before the dawning aurora, so the demons before the coming of Mary,—for she was the first to throw off the yoke of Satan, the first to put his forces to flight.

Brethren, you came here to-night with the simple faith of little children, to gather around Mary, your Mother, to pay her your tribute of love, and to make or renew your promises of obedience to her maternal instructions. There are many, alas! that stand aloof in proud self-sufficiency, and sneer, perhaps, at what they consider our weak puerility. But be not deceived. Christ, pointing to a group of children, said to His followers: "To be My true disciples, you must be as these." "For," says St. Paul, "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." It is not the high hills, but the valleys that catch the heavenly downpour, and the deeper the valley the more it holds. Hence, Mary was full of grace because the Lord regarded the humility of His handmaid. Never be ashamed or afraid to profess yourselves children of Mary. If you are married, pray to Mary the Mother of God, the spouse of the Holy Ghost; if you are single, let Mary, the Virgin of virgins, be your ideal. If you are rich, be a lady-in-waiting on the Queen of heaven, or a member of her royal guard; if you are poor you will find congenial company in the humble home of Nazareth; if you are a sinner—and who of us is not?—turn to the Refuge of sinners, to Mary, the Mother of mercy. Fidelity to your sodality is a mark of predestination. You are the successors of that first sodality—the little band of shepherds that

crowded round the crib of Jesus, and your praises, like theirs, are caught up by the angel choir and wafted to the ears of God. You follow Him with Mary and the pious women of Jerusalem, to wipe His agonized face like Veronica, or like Simon, to help Him carry His cross. Your faithfulness and perseverance, I predict, will gain for you the privilege of being among the first to meet Him at the general resurrection: among the first to reenter with Jesus and Mary into the kingdom of heaven.

Third Sunday of Advent.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

"*Amen, I say to you, there hath not arisen among them that are born of woman, a greater than John the Baptist.*"—Matt. xi. 11.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Christ's eulogy of John.
I. 1. Prophet and subject of prophecy. 2. Hidden and public life. 3. His temptation and victory.
II. 1. Words and deeds. 2. Sinful world, and process of regeneration. 3. John's last duty and death.
III. 1. John's message to Christ. 2. Its meaning. 3. Christ's reply.
Per.: The messenger of Death, and our answer.

SERMON.

SUCH was John's eulogy, pronounced by Truth incarnate. Higher praise was never given to mortal man. In dignity, in sanctity, he was less than Christ or Christ's Mother, but in the catalogue of the saints

of the Old Law, John, though last, is still the first and greatest. The noblest member is nearest the head, the purest water nighest its source, and John was own cousin to the Lord. That bread wherewith Christ fed the multitudes, that miraculous wine of Cana—God's immediate productions—must have been of the rarest quality; and so apparent, in the Baptist's birth and life and death, is the hand of God, that he must have been, among men, the noblest and the best.

Brethren, John the Baptist is the horizon where earth meets heaven; the link connecting the Old Law with the New; the last of the prophets and the first of the Apostles, and consequently styled by Our Lord more than a prophet. To be the subject of prophecy is a higher dignity than to be a prophet one's self, and, of them all, John alone enjoyed this dual honor—a prophet himself, he was foretold by Isaias and Malachias. The Angel Gabriel announced his advent to his parents, and his presence in her womb imparted to Elizabeth the prophetic spirit, and loosened Zachary's palsied tongue to foretell that he should be called the prophet of the Most High, and be the herald of the coming Saviour. More than a prophet; for while yet in his mother's womb, he leaped for joy at the approach of the unborn Saviour; the highest dignitary of them all, for, in the solemn regal procession, he walks immediately before the face of the King. More than a prophet; for to the supereminent gifts with which God had, by infusion, endowed him, he, by the purity, the

simplicity, the austerity and self-denial of his life, superadded such acquired virtues as to merit from the lips of his Saviour the title of angel. In his early boyhood, in his childhood almost, leaving home and parents he fled into the desert alone, and there for thirty years he communed with God—a true child of Nature, the wild beasts for his only companions, clothed in a garment of camel's hair with a leathern girdle, and locusts and wild honey for his food. For thirty long years, until the very recollection of him had passed from the popular mind, so that when, like the morning star, he reappeared to usher in the Sun of Justice, the people hailed him enthusiastically as the promised Messias. That was the crucial moment of John's life, and, as is usual with heroes, it developed his true greatness. "And he confessed and did not deny, and he confessed, I am not the Christ." The whirlwind of popular adulation would have turned any head less steady. He knew that, like the morning star, the most brilliant of all, he shone with a borrowed light, destined to diminish and fade away before the arisen sun. He was a burning and a shining light, indeed, but he shone not for himself but to reveal the Saviour. His mission was to cast upon the earth the first sparks of the love of Christ. No hollow reed he, to be shaken by the winds of flattery; no courtier he, craving for the ease and homage of royalty. Though a word would have deified him, though he disappointed his disciples and the whole people, he still persisted: "I am not the Christ."

"Then," said they, "thou art Elias returned to earth, or one of the prophets risen from the dead," but he answered: "I am not." The austerity of John's life resembled that of Elias. John never wrote his prophesies; neither did Elias. John was the precursor of the Lord—a mission, they knew, Elias was one day to fulfil. John denounced the sinful union of Herod with his brother's wife, even as Elias did that of Achab and Jezabel; all of which led the people to conclude that John was none other than the Thesbian returned to earth. But once again the humble Baptist rises superior to self, declaring: "No, I am but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose." There is nothing, it seems to me, so lovely, so edifying, so altogether touching, as profound humility in union with the loftiest greatness. It is something we can admire always, even when, in our little way, we despair of imitation. It forms the chief charm of John's character. Too humble to speak of himself, even as an individual, but rather as a breath, a voice, a cry sent forth into the wilderness of this world. Yet he unconsciously gave himself, thereby, his due meed of praise, by proclaiming himself a very part of the Saviour Himself. "The word of God," we are told, "came to John, the son of Zachary, in the desert." He was the word of God verbally, even as Christ was substantially. So true was he to his mission that his whole being, and reason for being, was expressed in that one cry: "Prepare ye the way of

the Lord." His whole personality, his life, his works cried: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Works cry louder than words: "The heavens show forth the glory of God and the firmament declareth the work of His hands." And of John the Baptist it may be truly said, that "his voice hath gone forth into all the earth and his words unto the ends of the world."

Ah, Brethren, if we could only realize that words are to deeds as a whisper to a clarion note; that our deeds cry out even when we are silent. If I that preach could only realize the importance of example, I would cease to be a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; and oh, that you who listen would but learn that louder still is the vengeful cry of evil deeds—that the blood of Abel and the iniquities of Sodom and Gomorrha and the rich man's oppression of the poor cry to heaven for vengeance, and that the cries thereof enter into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. If we are in sin, you or I, our whole personality—our lives, our deeds, are but a voice in the wilderness of this world, crying: "Prepare ye the way of the Demon, make straight his paths." It is sin that makes this world a desert—a vast, wooded wilderness, where, if you except the anchorites and hermits, few real men are found. Many lose their way in the pursuit of phantoms; tirelessly they search for the fountains of water, and find them bitter; they climb for the fruit of the topmost branch, and find it sour. Through this world roams the devil like a roaring lion; wild beasts, too, are here in human shape, more cruel even than the dumb

species; as the spectators in the Roman circus outdid in ferocity the lions that licked the feet of the martyrs. Men, too, like Dantesque trees, deeply rooted in the soil, thorny to prick the passer-by, and fruitless as the fig-tree cursed of God. According to God's original design man is an inverted tree, his branches directed earthward, his roots—the head—turned to God. But sinners reverse in themselves God's design: their inner man turns from God and buries himself—his head, his heart, his soul, firmly and deeply in the earth. Oh, if God would grant us to see men as God sees them, what a desert wilderness, what a preposterous spectacle the world would afford! The blind man, when Jesus touched his eyes, exclaimed: "Lord, I see men like trees, walking." Touch our eyes, O Lord, and grant us to see and correct the woeful aspect of Thy fair creation, ere John's threat be fulfilled and the axe of Thy wrath be laid to the root of the tree. No wonder the god of day, that rises so bright and cheery of mornings, sets at eve blushing rosy red at the enormities he beholds; no wonder Nature at even-time rains down her dewy tears, and dons the mourning garb of night, sending the indulgent moon to shade away monstrosities or else to gild and beautify. In this vale of woe it was, our Nature fell and lay half dead, but hope revived at the voice of John proclaiming the advent of the good Samaritan—the Saviour. O blessed desert of solitude—a wilderness to the wicked, but virtue fills up the valley and straightens the crooked ways, calls down the

manna and forth the gushing waters of heavenly consolation; and there God speaks to the heart of a promised land beyond, where all flesh shall see the salvation of God! O salutary desert, where, for the first time, the unbelieving, sinful soul hears that cry of John: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" whence it is led by John into the baptismal waters of the Jordan, to soon emerge again; and on the bank behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world! Artists love to paint that scene at Jesus' baptism—the two young men knee deep in the water, Jesus smilingly expectant, John hesitating but obedient, while over all the Spirit hovers like a dove, and the Father proclaims: "This is My beloved Son." Simple, lowly John, quick to reverence virtue, but quicker still to upbraid pharisaical vice; all-humble in the presence of his heavenly Master, but intrepid and defiant before the vicious Herod! And yet, that Herod loved him still, is, after Christ's eulogy, John's highest encomium. True, he was cast into prison, but Herod reverenced, praised, loved him still. The angel messenger of freedom, in chains; the preacher of reform, the model of every virtue, in a felon's cell! What a parody on human justice! But God's providence destined his captivity to have a deeper significance. John in his prison represents the abrogation of the Old Law, even as Christ does the introduction of the New. The Virgin of virgins gave to the world the Author of the New; the incestuous Herodias spitefully accomplished the destruction of the last remnant of

the Old. It is high praise for John that she alone and her dancing daughter hated him, for a pious tradition tells us that even the very soldier, sent to fetch his head to the banquet hall, with tears implored forgiveness and was, by the Baptist, blessed and comforted.

Brethren, there is one more incident, that wherein John sent from prison two of his disciples to the Christ, asking: "Art thou He that is to come, or wait we for another?" Here is mystic meaning! John did not doubt, but sought to convince his unhappy disciples what a rich legacy was theirs; viz., the Son of God. Two messengers he sent, as though his mission's final act was to turn Jew and Gentile to the Lord. He plays at being criminal, to show that it is only in misfortune the sinful soul sends forth to God the twofold prayer: "Lord, assist me and forgive." And for answer, Jesus bade them tell the miracles they had seen and heard. Brethren, the day will come for you and me—our dying day—when, ere another dawn, our angel guardian will come to ask: "Art thou he that is this day to come to heaven, or wait I for another?" Ah, well will it be for our souls if from the prison of our bodies they can answer: "Go tell your Lord and mine what things you have heard and seen. Tell Him I have been, by my charity, eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and a support to the halt. Tell Him that, through my means, souls have been cleansed from the leprosy of sin; and that, through me, even the spiritually dead have risen again. Tell Him my whole life has been

an evangelical object lesson to the spiritually poor." Oh, well will it be if we can answer thus, for the Lord will say: "Come, thou blessed of My Father, who was never scandalized in Me. Inasmuch as thou didst these things to the least of thy brethren, thou didst them unto Me. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Fourth Sunday of Advent.

MOTIVES TO REPENTANCE.

"*Preaching . . . penance unto the remission of sins.*"—Luke iii. 3.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Jewish day of wailing. II. Parallel. III. Penitential motives.
I. Nearness of death: 1. Uncertainty of life. 2. Especially for sinners. 3. Awful risk.
II. Miseries of sin: 1. Remorse. 2. Devil's lure. 3. The hour of death.
III. Final impenitence: 1. To-morrow. 2. Length of days. 3. God's justice.
Per.: 1. Baltassar. 2. Briton and Boer. 3. Forgiveness for all.

SERMON.

REPENTANCE unto the remission of sins. Brethren, on every anniversary of their conquest by the Romans, the Jews of Palestine are wont to drape themselves in mourning garb, and marching to sad and solemn music through Jerusalem's streets they bewail with tears and lamentations their nation's downfall, their ruined homes, and the departed glories of their Temple. Be not scandalized, O sinful Chris-

tians, if to-day I urge that you join in spirit their ranks and help to swell their woeful chorus. For by sin you have, like the Jews, crucified the Saviour; you have, like them, incurred the wrath of God. God's kingdom within you has been overthrown. In your Father's house there are indeed many mansions, but those designed for you have been razed to the ground. That temple of God, your soul, has been so unfitted for the indwelling of the Spirit, that you have lost at once God's temple and the temple's God. In sin and its woeful results you have out-Jewed the Jews; endeavor now to outdo them in repentance. But rend not your garments; rather rend your hearts, grieving in spirit and in truth. The Jewish day of wailing, in modern times at least, is but the exhibition of the trappings and the suits of woe, but you should have within you that which passeth show, a sin-consuming remorse of soul, a fiery baptism of penance unto the remission of your sins. Let the motives to repentance I suggest be as fagots on that fire, and a breath to fan them into flame, that the dross of sin in your souls may be purged and burned away.

Brethren, to the healthful man few things are harder to realize than the nearness of death. God made you to walk upright, your eyes removed as far as possible from the ground, lest being reminded too frequently of your earthiness, you should find life unendurable. But this, like others of God's mercies, you, reckless sinner, abuse to your own destruction. Yet think a moment and you can, you must acknowledge your danger from death's nearness. God in

Scripture, the Church in her liturgy, and Nature with a thousand tongues, proclaim that man is dust and shall return to dust. Yet will such warning make no deeper or more lasting impression on your soul than do the Lenten ashes on your forehead? Damocles, they say, though crowned as king and seated at a royal banquet, failed to enjoy himself because above his head there hung suspended by a single hair a naked sword,—and you—will you revel in forbidden pleasures within the very swing of death's fierce scythe? Afloat in a frail bark on the sea of life, you cannot but feel that but an inch divides you from the ocean of eternity, and can you, notwithstanding winds and waves, still sleep the sleep of sin? Jonas voyaging to Tharsis in defiance of God, and Jesus on the sea of Galilee—each slept amid the storm, but neither Jonas' despair nor the conscious sanctity of Christ can be the secret of your unconcern. Your indifference is founded on the hope that the fates have allotted you length of days. Ah! remember that the thread of life that Clotho spins and Lachesis directs must pass between the busy shears of Atropos. To John in Patmos death appeared as a sickly knight on a jaded horse, but that vision of death is that of a saint desiring to be dissolved and be with God. To sinners such as you, death is an invincible warrior on a flying steed, armed with a spear to slay the weak, and arrows to kill from afar the unsuspecting strong. Aye, and on his heel is a spur that you yourselves have buckled there to hasten his approach—the spur of sin. "For," says Scripture, "by sin death comes into

the world, and the sting of death is sin." No flourish of trumpets heralds his onset, but down he swoops suddenly, like the Assyrians on Israel, like a wolf on the fold. "For the sinner," Scripture says, "the grave doth yawn thrice wider than for other men, and hell doth enlarge its mouth." In history, sacred and profane, you will find that the world's greatest sinners have almost invariably died sudden and unprovided deaths, whereas, according to the selfsame history, the strongest brake on death's chariot-wheel is self-denying virtue. For the virtuous are trees of precious wood which the grim woodsman, Death, will, before felling, allow to season and develop; but the wicked are as worthless timber which may at any time be cut down and used as firewood. And oh! remember that as the tree leans, so shall it fall—as a man lives, so shall he die. The salvation of a habitual sinner demands of God the exercise of more miraculous power than would suffice to cause the leaning oak to straighten up and lean and fall the other way. To expect such a miracle from God is blasphemous unto perdition. St. Jerome says that of one hundred thousand men invariably bad, scarce one finds mercy before God. Will you then imitate the hundred thousand, and take your chance of being the favored one? What, risk your soul! You may risk all the world beside, your goods and chattels you may, to weather the gale, cast overboard and afterwards recover, but not your soul, for that once lost is lost forever. What will the whole world profit you, if you lose your soul? And if the acquisition of a

world even would not justify your risking the danger of continuance in deadly sin, what shall we say of a vile momentary pleasure, a handful of filthy lucre or an inhuman revenge? To risk your soul for such worse than trifles is like fishing for frogs with a golden hook, or braving a tempestuous voyage for a cargo of manure. Tell me not that though you sin to-day you will repent to-morrow; for you there may be no to-morrow. Take example from the Ninivites who, when they heard from Jonas that after forty days destruction was to come upon them for their sins, donned immediately sackcloth and ashes and so averted the wrath of God. You, no doubt, would have deferred repentance until the evening of the fortieth day. Repent you now, now, more promptly even than the Ninivites. No forty days of grace are promised you. You know not the day nor the hour of the Lord's coming; of your death you know not the day nor the hour.

Brethren, as a motive urging to repentance not less potent than the nearness of death, is the host of miseries resulting from a life of sin. I speak not here of bodily infirmities, though they, too, count for much, but far more painful are the tortures of a guilty conscience. Between the birth of life and the birth of death there is a striking contrast. A woman in labor when delivered forgets her anguish, rejoicing that a man is born into the world, but the soul begetting sin, though it feel a momentary pleasure, is presently convulsed in an agony of remorse. "Sin," says Scripture, "sin when completed begetteth death,"

and death is such a hideous monster that the soul that brings it into being faints with horror at the sight. There is no keener torment than remorse. The nearer the dentist's probe approaches the nerve, the more it hurts, because the nerve communicates directly with the brain, and the brain with the soul. How exquisite the pain would be did the probe directly touch the soul, as actually occurs when man awakens to a consciousness of guilt. Thus it happens that sinners crowd into a moment sufferings that savor of the torments of the damned. Thenceforth they know no peace. Each whispering breeze of paradise alarms Adam; Cain is startled at the stirring of a leaf; the erstwhile valiant David dreads the subaltern Urias, and Judas, alarmed at a shadow of suspicion, goes and hangs himself. True, you may have sinned and yet not suffered so; you may know sinners that are even happy. Ah! the devil is a skilful bird-catcher. He catches one and feeds him well and teaches him to sing and seemingly enjoy captivity, but why? To lure others into the snare and so deprive them of their freedom and mayhap their lives. But if you, being caught, are making merry in a life of sin, believe me, there will come a time—your dying hour—when conscience will awake. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, and ate and drank and went his way rejoicing, but when in the final adjustment of their affairs he found his father had blessed his brother Jacob and made him heir, he roared like a lion for very anguish. Face to face with death you will—you must—realize your pitiful bar-

gain, whereby to gratify your animal appetites you forfeited your heavenly heritage. Like tigers long pent up, the pains of conscience will then spring upon you. Your life, which seemed before as calm and clear as a mountain lake, will then be lashed to fury by the storm that is to rend apart your soul and body, and all the sinful refuse that lay hidden will be cast up at your feet. The guilty prisoner is never so agitated as on the eve of trial. Your presumptuous habit of relying on God's mercy will not avail you then, for the hope of the virtuous is as the sun of their lives which reaches its zenith at their death, but the sinner's hope, though strong through life, gradually declines and disappears at the moment of his greatest need. Peter's salutary sorrow will not be yours, unless you bitterly weep whenever, as now, the Saviour glances toward you; but if His frequent appeals to you are all in vain, be sure your final state will be a Judas-like despair.

Brethren, if neither the nearness of death nor the misery of a sinful life can drive you to repentance, remember this, that the result of deferring your conversion will be an inability to repent at all. God said to Pharao: "Let My people go," and when he would not, God sent the plagues on Egypt. When grievously oppressed by each, Pharao would send for Moses and bid him remove the scourge on promise of freedom for his people, but when Moses would say: "When, when, set me a time," Pharao would always answer: "To-morrow." Set me a time, ye sinners, set me a time now. You know not if there be a

morrow, but of this you may be certain, that the longer you delay like Pharao the harder will your heart become, till finally you are engulfed in the sea of your own iniquities. You live a vulture's life, yet you hope for a swan's death—a spotless being slowly floating down to the ocean of eternity chanting the while sweet melody. Young as you are and strong, you have no guarantee of time sufficient for such a metamorphosis, for our physical powers are like the strings of a violin—there is more danger of their snapping suddenly under the tension of youth than when relaxed with old age. But even granting that you live for years and years, will your ruling passion be overcome more easily then than now? Ah! a mountain rill is at its source quite easily crossed, but follow it down into the plain and see how broad and deep it grows. So, too, your sin; the farther, the lower you follow it, the more impassable grows the barrier between you and your God. Or will your nature be more pliant after years of sin, making conversion easier then than now? Ah! the twig is easily bent and made to grow this way or that, but engines and ropes and chains would scarce suffice to right the leaning oak. And if perchance with infinite labor the tree be made to lean from left to right, think you it will retain its new position, or will it not rather swing back directly the tension is relaxed? So, too, a tardy conversion prompted by necessity is labor in vain, productive of no stable results, a sham, a lie. But God the just, you say, the merciful, will spare me for the little good I have done. On the contrary. His

justice and His mercy both demand that He abandon you at death's door as you in life abandoned Him. The salvation of the entire human race is God's first great concern; individual interests are secondary. Would it then be just or merciful to equalize at death the saint and sinner, to disgust the good with a system of salvation that allows the sinner's darkened life-day to close with a sunburst of glory; to encourage the wicked to continue in their sin confident of God's favor at the last? Why, Christ Himself has sworn He will deny before His Father in heaven all such as have habitually denied Him before men on earth. Hence the saying that as a man lives so he dies. "They," says Scripture, "they that are converted in the evening shall suffer hunger like dogs." You treat God like a dog, for to turn to Him only in the evening of your existence is like feeding a dog with the refuse of a feast. What wonder then if at your death God fail to grant you a morsel of repentance, however much you hunger for it and entreat. But a humble and a contrite heart, you say, the merciful Lord will never despise. True, but the measure of grace He will accord you, though enough to sanctify the average man, will not suffice to save a soul with such a past as yours. Your ruling passion, be it drink, or lust, or hate, or what not, will be strong in death, because death being the crisis in the battle between the powers of light and darkness, the devil, like a skilful general, will marshal all his forces for the final struggle. That is what Christ means when, addressing such as you, He says: "Unless you do pen-

ance you shall all likewise perish, for in the hour of your need you shall seek Me and you shall not find Me, but you shall die in your sins."

Brethren, King Baltassar made a feast and sacrilegiously ate and drank from the vessels stolen from God's Temple, and all the while a hostile army hammered at his gates. Beware alike his folly and his wickedness. Beware lest while you pollute with sin your soul and body, death's hand be knocking at your door, or the invisible hand of God be tracing on the wall your everlasting doom. You know you are not happy in your sin. Give it up. You know repentance will be harder the longer it is delayed. Give your sin up now. You know neglect of warnings or repeated falls lead to final impenitence. Turn to Jesus once for all and never take your eyes from Him again. Ah! see the mangled Saviour toiling with His cross up Calvary! Will He pity you, poor sinner, bruised and torn by the world, the devil and the flesh? A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind. Two soldiers, a Briton and a Boer, lay side by side in a hospital—two shattered wrecks from the battlefield. Silently they gazed, each at the other, with hate at first, then wonder, then with sorrow, and when on food being brought the Briton passed it to his enemy, those great rough men broke down and cried like children. Ah! the heart of Jesus is not less human than were theirs, nor less prompt to sympathize. He has experienced our every wound and misery. He knows our weaknesses, and will meet a prompt repentance with a prompt forgiveness. Turn then to

Him, thou Peter, though thou hast denied Him thrice, turn to Him weeping bitterly. Turn to Him, thou Magdalen, and learn to love Him much and much will be forgiven. Arise, thou prodigal! no more of husks or swinish company, but arise and return to your Father. Doubt you how He will receive you? Ah! see His arms stretched out ready to embrace you; behold His bosom whereon to lay your weary head with tears of joy and thankfulness; hear His angels rejoicing because you who were lost are found, you who were dead are come to life again. "Come to Me," He says, "come to Me all ye that labor with temptation and I will fortify you with sin-resisting grace; come to Me all ye that are heavy-laden with sin and I will refresh you with forgiveness; come to Me and you shall find peace for your souls."

Christmas Day.

The Threefold Birth of Christ.

"*Who shall declare His generation?*"—Isa. liii. 8.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Masses signify: I. Carnal. II. Spiritual. III. Eternal birth.
I. Eternal birth: 1. Ineffable. 2. Pagans, and St. Paul. 3. St. John, chap. i.
II. Carnal birth: 1. Prodigies, paradoxes, and Eliseus. 2. God born of a Virgin. 3. Man's methods and God's.
III. Spiritual birth: 1. Grace appeared. 2. To all. 3. Signs of its presence.
Per.: Exhortation to go over (from world) to Bethlehem.

SERMON.

Brethren, why is it that on Christmas day, and on Christmas day only, the Church permits each priest to celebrate three Masses? She wishes, thereby, to fittingly honor Christ's threefold birth; His birth in eternity from the bosom of the Father; His birth in time from the womb of His Mother; His subsequent births innumerable, without intervention of Father or Mother, in regenerated and converted souls. The first, the midnight Mass, typifies His birth in Bethlehem, when spiritual darkness enveloped all and men slept the sleep of sin. The Mass of the aurora glorifies His first spiritual birth—the dawn of Christian truth in the minds and hearts of the shepherds; and His divine birth, though first in order, yet known to us only through His temporal and spiritual coming—His

eternal birth is celebrated last, with brilliant pomp and splendor and elaborate music as worthy as may be of the Divinity. St. John, in the first chapter of his Gospel, commemorates all three, saying: "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was made flesh; and we saw His glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Brethren, so ineffable is the birth of the Word of God in the bosom of the Divinity, that even Isaias stands aghast and exclaims: "Who shall declare His generation?" A fitter subject for angels' meditation than for human speech. That a son should be equal in all things to his father; that a father should communicate to his son his entire nature and yet lose nothing thereby; that a son should be born without a mother; that an infinitely perfect being should be the product of a single intellectual act; these are truths indeed, but beyond human ken—discernible only with the eye of faith. In the birth of Venus from the waves, or of armed Minerva from Jupiter's head, we find the pagan straining after the truth—the rise of the all-beautiful from the illimitable Divinity and the birth of a God from a God. St. Paul's address to the Hebrews (chap. i.) speaks of the Word as: "The brightness of His Father's glory and the figure of His substance." That is to say "as the light from the sun, so the Word from the Father." Proceeding by a continuous process of generation from an undivided source, coexistent therewith, emanating from it, but leaving behind no void, and everywhere bearing and

imprinting an image of its source. But why seek to examine with the naked eye the midday sun? Let us rather turn the eye of faith to that sublime first chapter of St. John and learn that "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God. By Him all things were made. In Him was life, and He is the light of men." In every act of the intelligence, an image of the thing comprehended is produced on the retina of the mind's eye. In us this Word is a mere shadow, as unsubstantial as a mirrored image, but in God, whatever falls within the radius of the Divinity, however distinct from God it may be, must still be substantially God Himself. Hence, the Father, gazing on His own infinitely perfect nature, produces within Himself an image thereof, a being substantially identical with Himself, but personally distinct—the Word of God; the second person of the Trinity. His existence, His essence is to reflect the perfections of the divine nature, its possibilities of imitation, and hence, in Him as in an exemplar, all things had their first ideal life; by Him as a model, all things were made; and He enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, for He is the way and the truth unto life everlasting.

Brethren, Christ's second birth was that of Bethlehem. Looking back now on the prodigies of that time, one is led to exclaim once again: "Who shall declare His generation!" What a contrast of events, what an upset of all our preconceived ideas! Solomon asserted there was nothing new under the sun, but here, at last, is something new. Almighty God

becomes a helpless babe; a Son born of a virgin without a father; two natures in a single person; the King of kings and the Lord of lords a despised outcast in the direst poverty! The oldest of all in the order of being—the ancient of days—is just born. What prodigies these! Again, what a contrast of events. Hitherto it was the rule for infants to be born and the aged to die, but to-day the contrary; the aged of days is born and death claims the youthful Stephen and the Holy Innocents. How singular, that in the order of events and in the Church's calendar, the birth of life should be so soon followed by the triumph of death. The fact is pregnant with meaning. It aptly explains away all of the many apparent contradictions and inconsistencies of the Redeemer's personality and career. The pagan idea, that it was necessary, from time to time, for one man to die for the people, though false in its application, was fundamentally true. Humility alone exalteth. Adam's pride is not to be cured but by Christ's humiliation, and no sooner does the Word of God undergo what must have been for Him like voluntary death—no sooner is He become incarnate, than the pure souls of Stephen and the Innocents wing their flight heavenward. The Father takes off His royal robe and places it on the shoulders of the prodigal. Christ lays aside His divinity and His life only to infuse them into us, for His debasement is our exaltation. In the sixth chapter of the fourth Book of Kings, all this is beautifully typified. We see the son of Eliseus the prophet on the river bank hewing

logs for house-building; and presently the axe-head flies from the handle and sinks in the stream. Moved by his son's lamentations, Eliseus seizes a log and casts it in and lo! down it sinks to the bottom, while the metal rises to the surface and is restored. Brethren, such metal is human nature, prone of itself, as the sixty-eighth Psalm says, to stick fast in the mire of the deep, unable to do anything of itself, and able to construct a mansion for itself in heaven only when wielded by the Son of God. And in the words of the same Psalm, it cried: "Father, draw me out of the mire that I may not stick fast." And into the muddy stream of this world the Father cast the Saviour—the Wood of the root of Jesse—and lo! the original condition of human nature was restored. Thus it was and for this reason that the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. What thoughts arise as we kneel before the humble little crib! What questions! First is wonder; here is that new thing which Jeremias promised God would effect upon the earth, in that a woman should compass a man. With every faculty of his soul fully developed, a man is born, the most venerable of men; and born for the second time. When Christ spoke to him of Baptism, Nicodemus exclaimed: "Born again! How am I, an old man, to return to the womb of my mother and be born again?" But here is impossibility become a fact. And not a new thing only, but a new man, such as the world hitherto has never known; a mere man apparently, but evidently possessing a divine nature; a divine person and still

endowed with our humanity. A King, this, from the first moment of His conception—aye, the King of kings, in whose power it was to say even of whom and how and when and where He should be born. For the first and last time in the history of the universe a child chooses His Mother, and the creature gives life to the Creator. Where now is the philosophic axiom "no one gives what he has not"? Here the ocean rises from a little fountain, and the sun receives its light from a tiny star,—God born of a Virgin! Though the light goes out from it, the sun's lustre remains undimmed; a wondrous plant is Mary, sprung from the root of Jesse which bore its precious fruit, indeed, but never shed its virginal blossoms. In her, once again, the newly created earth, unploughed, unsown, sent forth at the command of God the herb and tree. God born of the humblest of God's creatures, in a manger of a stable, of a village whose very obscurity was a byword and a reproach! Born in the midst of winter, without means and without friends—and at a time when His spiritual and temporal enemies had reached the zenith of their power! Surely no one but a God could have afforded to undertake and accomplish in the face of such obstacles, the mission of the Saviour. Ah! how short-sighted we are and how little conformed to the spirit of Christ! Give me but the power to choose, and I would elect to have been born of a royal queen, heir to unlimited power, surrounded with every comfort and luxury; my virtues glorified, my very faults interpreted as virtues by

cunning flattery. Alas and alas! how different from Christ, who, God as He was, took upon Himself the form of a servant; whose one aim was to shun praise and court persecution; who hid the glories of His birth in the stable of Bethlehem, but exhibited His ignominious death to the whole world on the summit of Calvary. Oh let me, ere the Christmas season ends, kneel a while before the crib and listen to the wordless wisdom that falls from that little preacher in that little pulpit. I may have tears in my eyes but I will have unspeakable consolation in my heart. I will lay before Him my proud heart and stubborn will, and ask Him in mercy to pity and forgive. I will, like holy Simeon, hold Him in my arms and as confidently ask the Father: "Now dismiss Thy servant in peace, O Lord, for my eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Brethren, Christ's third birth is His spiritual coming by grace into the souls of men. Often, alas! is He persecuted and recrucified by the modern Herod,—sin. But happily, too, He is born again and again in every soul that is regenerated or converted to God. "And we saw His glory," says St. John; and St. Paul says of Christ's spiritual births—"The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly and justly and godly in this world." Just prior to the Christian era, God had apparently abandoned the world and men ceased to turn to Him in spirit and in truth. They doubted His knowledge of human ills and despaired of His

aid. Hence, the grace of God appeared in the person of Jesus, and appeared to representatives of all nations, collected for the Passover—came, actually experiencing our every infirmity, and so binding men to God with a sympathetic bond, and discovering to them the precious pearl of salvation, to purchase which they would sell their every possession and their lives. He appeared to all, I repeat, for it is a remarkable fact that Christ's birth was made known to every condition of men and women, from John in his mother's womb to the aged Simeon; from the royal Magi to the simple shepherds; to Mary the Virgin; to Anna the widow; to Elizabeth the espoused; at His death every nation was represented; and since then, through the Church, the light of Gospel truths has suffused the world, even the spiritually blind and the slumbering. Such is the audience the infant orator of Bethlehem addresses. On Sinai of old His majestic presence terrified the people, but who can now resist the simple pathos of His childish eloquence? Ah, He has held the world spellbound for nineteen hundred years and been born again in the souls of men, times innumerable. Brethren, how shall you and I know whether or not Christ is born in us? Whether or not now live, not we, but Christ in us? This shall be a sign unto you. Do you deny your ungodly and worldly desires; do you live soberly and justly and godly in this world? Soberly; do you, more wisely than the banqueters of Cana, partake moderately of the cup of pleasure, that you may, like Lazarus, enjoy the greater

delights to come? Justly; do you try in every relation of life to do to others as you would like to be done by? Godly; are you faithful in your duties to religion and to God? Ah, how true it is that Christ was set for the ruin of many and a sign that shall be contradicted; for alas! there are many temples into which He has not entered, nor cast thence them that buy and sell therein. Again, this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Is your soul a proud, obtrusive mansion, or a humble stable in the background, warmed by the spirit of love as was that of Bethlehem by the breath of the kine? Ah, Brethren, it is all very well to receive Christ in communion, but He will not be born in us unless we permanently amend our lives. Nay, such communions lead to final impenitence. Christ said to the adulterous woman: "Go, and sin no more, lest something worse befall thee." And Judas, you know, had scarcely received holy communion when he rushed off to betray the Lord.

Brethren, no man can serve two masters, God and the world. The world reminds me of an obsequious innkeeper; you put up at his place for a while and he effusively gives you the freedom of his house and encourages you to eat, drink and make merry; but the time of reckoning comes, and the landlord, with a sterner face, declares you shall not go hence until you pay the last farthing. Let us turn from such an artful deceiver to the lovely Babe of Bethlehem; let us learn well the truths that object lesson teaches,

that Christ's first and second birth may not be for us wholly in vain, and that He may be, once again, born spiritually in our souls unto life everlasting. Amen.

Sunday within the Octave of Christmas.

NAZARETH AND BETHLEHEM.

"When the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem those who were under the law."—Gal. iv. 4, 5.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Christmas, the children's festival.
I. Thoughts at crib: 1. The Fall and Promise. 2. Plan of Redemption. 3. Effect on woman's life.
II. Mary: 1. Her family. 2. Elizabeth. 3. The Annunciation.
III. Nativity: 1. Visitation and return. 2. Bethlehem. 3. The Shepherds.
Per.: 1. Angels' hymn. 2. Christmas long ago. 3. Prayer for happy death.

SERMON.

THE central figure of these festive Christmas days is a little child. It is preeminently the children's festival; and only children, and those who, despite their years, are in mind and heart but children still, can enter fully into the hallowed, gracious spirit of this time. I lately heard a little prattler tell the story of Nazareth and of Bethlehem, and sure am I, that could I reproduce her artless manner and the simple tale she told, I would touch, for once at least, your very

hearts. The simple pathos of that story, simply told, has charmed the world for nineteen hundred years, and more than aught besides, has served to batter down the barriers of unbelief. Perhaps we could not better spend the time to-day than by recalling once again the tenderly pathetic—the oft-told—tale of Christ's nativity.

Brethren, there is no more salutary exercise than just to kneel a while beside the crib, with its attendant figures, and suffer the tongue to utter whatever thoughts arise. In that tiny Babe we see with the eye of faith the divine and the human blended into one—reunited, as it were, and yet united as they had never been before. The thought carries us back to the opening chapter of this wondrous history, back to the lamentable fall of our first parents through pride and disobedience, and the consequent alienation of God and humanity. In the dark storm of God's wrath that then burst upon the world, there was just one rift in the cloud, one slender ray of light and hope, viz.: God's words to the serpent: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, and she shall crush thy head." Here in the cave before us is the woman; there in the manger, her seed—her Son. Pride and disobedience wrought our ruin; humility and obedience repaired it; for here is she who humbly answered: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," and there is He of whom it is written in the head of the Book: "Behold, I come."

Brethren; St. Paul to the Romans (chap. v.) says: "By one man sin entered into the world and by sin,

death; and so sin and death passed upon all men from Adam unto Moses, even upon those who had not sinned." From Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ human nature bore irremediably its hereditary taint of original sin, and its consequent proneness to actual transgressions. So mortally offended had God been, that not even all the efforts of all men and angels for all time could make sufficient reparation. Man is more potent for evil than for good. He can offend God infinitely, but make amends as best he may, they are but finite—limited. Yet man had sinned and man, not angels, must atone, and could not; nor could God's mercy freely pardon all until His justice had been satisfied. In this dilemma it was that God the Son, humbly obedient to His Father's will, exclaimed: "Behold, I come. I come to take upon Me man's nature and man's sins. As man, I will make atonement such as man should make; as God, the value of My reparation will be infinite. I will merit such a boundless treasury of grace for man, that all men, past, present, and to come, may draw therefrom by acts of faith and hope, love and contrition, and through the sacraments of holy Church, sufficient of that heavenly coin to pay the entrance fee into the kingdom of My Father." "Thus," concludes St. Paul, "as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one many were made just, that as sin hath reigned to death, so also grace might reign by justice unto life everlasting through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Brethren, this then is the Child in whom the Deity and humanity met and kissed and were reconciled. Looking forward—on His feeble heart-beat hangs the salvation of a world; looking backward—He is the fulfilment of four thousand years of figure and of prophecy. However vague and worldly their ideas of the future Messias, and the kingdom He was to found, the Israelites and Jews never lost faith and hope in His ultimate arrival. This expectancy influenced largely woman's life. Celibacy was practically unknown; fruitfulness was woman's choicest blessing and barrenness her direst curse, for every mother of Israel fondly hoped to discover some day the divine nature of the Messias beaming on her through the bright eyes and loving smile of her little one. To one alone—Mary—came a light from God to know the higher value of virginity. She alone of all, by vow of chastity, forfeited, humanly speaking, her claim to be the mother of the coming Saviour; and, wondrous providence of God! she alone of all was chosen for that honor.

Mary was the daughter of Joachim and Anna of Nazareth, humble folk enough it is true, and yet descendants of a priestly and a royal line. They had but two children, Mary, the humble virgin, and her younger sister, Salome, of a more ambitious and worldly turn of mind. Their relatives were few, comprising Cleophas and Joseph, bachelor brothers of Joachim, living in Nazareth, and cousin Elizabeth, Zachary's wife, in the hill country of Judea. Mary being heiress to all her folks possessed, she was

obliged by Jewish law to take for husband the man nearest of kin, for these two reasons: first, lest the line of David should be broken, and secondly, that the property might not pass from out the family. Thus Mary, notwithstanding her chaste vow and natural repugnance, became engaged to Joseph. Meanwhile Salome married Zebedee of Capharnaum, and had for sons the Apostles James and John. Cleophas, too, was married, to whom we know not, except that her name was Mary and that their sons were the Apostles James and Judas—not the traitor—and Simon Zelotes. We may remark in passing that Jesus and John the Baptist were second cousins, and that of the twelve Apostles, five were, humanly speaking, first cousins to the Lord. While Mary, therefore, was engaged to Joseph, there came to her news of the wondrous apparition of the angel to Zachary in the Temple, and the miraculous conception whereby her cousin Elizabeth was to be the mother of the Lord's precursor,—the Baptist. What must the Virgin's thoughts have been when hearing the Messias was at hand, and her own family the instrument of His coming! Did she covet the honor every daughter of Israel coveted? No doubt in her humility she never deemed it possible. Anyhow, had she not consecrated herself to God? and dearer even than the honor of being His Mother was the happiness of being His virgin spouse. Six months had passed, and once again the angel of Zachary's vision, Gabriel, came and hailed the Virgin as the Mother of God. Mary's astonishment was not so much that such a message should

be sent to a woman of Israel, but that she should be the one—she, a lowly maid, not married yet, and bound by solemn vow never to be known of man. How did her gentle heart flutter and her spirit glow with love and thankfulness when from the angel's lips she heard that virginity and motherhood are not things incompatible in her whose offspring is a God; that He who made the barren Elizabeth conceive, could of Mary's flesh and blood alone build Him a body for His indwelling. "Behold," she says, "the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word," and in that very instant the hopes of ages were fulfilled; the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.

Brethren, Mary's first impulse was to be away from Nazareth, to open her overflowing heart to some sympathetic woman, and so with haste she sped to whisper her secret to her cousin Elizabeth. Supposing even that some vague doubts still haunted Mary's mind, they must have been utterly dispelled by Elizabeth's greeting of her as the Mother of her God, and the bound the Baptist gave at the approach of his unborn Saviour. There Mary spent three happy months, and then the sword began to pierce her gentle heart. The Baptist's birth was nigh, and soon the friends and neighbors would gather round to congratulate his parents and celebrate his circumcision. What would they think of Mary? With the sublimest faith and trust in God she had bowed her will to His, but now there stared her in the face suspicion, calumny and death. Back to Nazareth she fled, and

instinctively sought protection from Joseph, her intended husband, only to have her worst fears realized, for Joseph, being a just man, immediately sought to sever their engagement. But God did not abandon her. An angel came to Joseph, enlightening him as to the true state of affairs, and Joseph, like the good and true man he was, immediately made Mary his lawful wedded wife. Six months of peace ensued, and then we find them on the road to Bethlehem, the town of David's line, where they and all his other lineal descendants had to present themselves that a general census of the people might be taken. The way was long—some eighty miles—and wearisome, and the season being winter, the journey must have been a downright hardship, especially for Mary, so soon to be a mother. The wintry day was closing in as they passed through Jerusalem and came in sight of Bethlehem, a few miles farther on. To them it seemed like coming to their own, and the brightly illumined homes and the sounds of mirth and joy from many a family reunion gave to the weary travellers a sense of peace and rest. But alas! their own received them not. First, from the village inn and then from door after door they were turned away, either because there was no room to give, or else because there was no will to give what room there was. Poor Mary! we make way for, and salute, a priest who bears the Blessed Sacrament, but not even these small courtesies were offered thee. Poor Mary! they could even refuse respect and help to one who showed the outward signs of youthful

motherhood. Aye, women, mothers themselves, came to their doors and looked and answered, no! Ah! when the tramp of Herod's soldiers and the clash of their arms are heard in the streets of Bethlehem—when the innocents are torn from their mothers' arms and slaughtered before their eyes—let these mothers not wonder if the pale, beseeching face of a would-be lodger flit across their remembrance. Poor Mary! in a vain attempt to retrace her steps to Jerusalem, she sinks down by the way, and then, assisted by her husband, by one last effort she totters to a cave where cattle and sheep are stalled. How natural it all is, and how pitiful! The young wife utterly exhausted and alone; her husband gone to fetch a cup of water and assistance; one instant of semi-conscious ecstasy, and she clasps to her breast her newborn babe—born without the pains of child-birth—as miraculously born as was the newly risen Saviour transferred when He appeared in the midst of His Apostles, the doors being closed. There, then, in the crib before us is the group, Jesus, Mary, Joseph. Who does not love to ponder on that picture of which the utter simplicity is the chiefest charm? The scanty swaddling-clothes, the stable, the manger, His dire poverty—these do not repel, but rather seem most fitting, for round Him earthly splendor would be as tawdry tinsel, while these are like the clothing of the lily that rivals Solomon's garb. No fear that in the contemplation of the intensely human in Christ we lose sight of His divinity, for already outside the cave the night is all aglow and the air filled with heavenly

melody. Midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem a company of shepherds guarded the flocks intended for sacrificial purposes in the Temple; suddenly in their midst appeared an angel, dazzling bright, and higher hovered hundreds of bright spirits. One moment's silence while the heavenly messenger announced his tidings of great joy, and then, as chorus follows solo, so the entire band burst forth and swelled the glad refrain: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth to men of good will peace." Gradually it died away and the light faded from the sky, as when the grand Cathedral functions close and the music ceases and the myriad tapers are one by one extinguished. But like the incense odor in the vacant aisles, like the whispering echoes of music long since played, comes the sound of that hymn played round the shepherds on their way to Bethlehem, and in the cave, and ever afterwards; and down the ages reechoing from heart to heart and from soul to soul, gathering all like children round the crib of Bethlehem, rolls on that heavenly chorus: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth to men of good will peace."

Brethren, there is a deep significance in the fact that the first announcement of the Messias' birth was made to the shepherds of the flock intended for the Temple and for God, that through them the tidings of great joy should come to all mankind. Very appropriately, too, the angel while delivering his message, pointed to Bethlehem, for Jesus is the model for us all and the angelic hymn of "Glory to God, good

will on earth to men, and peace," embodies in itself the chief characteristics of an ideal Christian life. It is only when we are fulfilling the two great precepts of love for God and our neighbors, that the peace of heaven inundates our souls; or possibly the meaning is, that peace must be established in us by conquest of ourselves ere we are truly fit to give God glory and good will to men. Brethren, how does this description of a Christian tally with our lives? We bow our heads beside the crib of Jesus and think alas! what Christmas used to mean, and what its meaning now is. The happy Christmases of boyhood days are but a memory fondly cherished. In later years the peace we then knew fled. We thrust the Saviour from our souls, and though He often came and knocked and begged a lodging there, we answered, "No!" We even slew Him. As Herod would have done, we did—we snatched that Infant from His Mother's breast, and nailed Him, scourged and thorn-crowned, upon a cruel cross. We did it by our sins. And then again sweet peace came back when we by tears and sighs and moans did penance for those sins—when we went back to Him, as did the shepherds, in simple, humble adoration; when we offered Him the richest treasures of our hearts and souls, as did the Eastern kings. God grant our final hour be like that! God grant that, holding Jesus to our breasts as holy Simeon did, we may as confidently beg to be dismissed in peace! God grant in that dread hour we may look back and see: "Glory to God, good will on earth to men," written on every page of our life's his-

tory, and, looking forward, hear from our Judge's lips that our eternal lot is "Peace."

Epiphany.

THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

"*This is the victory which overcometh the world—our faith.*"—I. John v. 4.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: King Canute, and the flowing tide.
I. Time: 1. Irresistible. 2. Curse of unbelievers. 3. Blessing to faithful.
II. The call: 1. Mists over Pagandom and Jewry. 2. Call of Jew, Gentile; rich, poor. 3. Weapons of our warfare.
III. Victory incomplete: 1. Jewish priests. 2. Within the fold. 3. Without.
Per.: Still a triumph. 1. Nabuchodonosor's dream. 2. Sun and star. 3. Rock of Ages.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, when King Canute of England had reigned full many a year, and had brought strength and peace to his dominions by the conquest of his enemies, his cringing courtiers were wont to style him the Omnipotent. But one day, when old and feeble, being seated on the shore, he bade the flowing tide recede; the wavelets, nothing daunted, stole around the royal feet and sent the king and courtiers scampering to higher ground. Then turning, he sternly rebuked his flatterers, and taking the crown from his hoary head, he placed it on the crucifix and bade them henceforth worship Christ alone—the Lord of earth and sea.

Brethren, time and tide will wait for no man, be

he ten times a king. But more unalterable even than the tide, is the lapse of time. Whatever may be accomplished by human ingenuity to modify the influences of earth and sea, it will always be true that the one thing in Nature absolutely beyond our control is time. Day follows day like the ripples on the sea; years crowd upon years like the breakers on the beach, and every hundredth wave announces with a louder and a deeper roar, that lo! another century hath come and gone. If happy be our lot, time glides with winged feet; if misery be our portion, time lags, 'tis true, but still plods on as inexorably as the thumping engines in the ship's hold, regardless of the suffering passengers above. To the natural man, to the unbeliever, time is a curse. Through this vale of tears it scourges him on like a shrinking slave whither he knoweth not. A century ago, thinks he, what was I; a century hence, where or what shall I be? He loves the world's light and heat, and fain would linger there forever—but no, his enemy, time, hurries him on into a frigid darkness unbroken by a single ray of hope. But not so you, my Christian brethren. The world's strongest power, time, has no such terror for you. Time well spent is for you a guarantee of a happy immortality—it is your key to heaven. You take the slave-driving demon, time, and subdue him into a docile angel to lead you to the Lord. With King Canute you turn to the crucifix, and thankfully declare that this and this alone is the victory which overcometh time and the world—our faith.

Brethren, Christ says of Himself: "I am the light of the world." He is the light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. Previous to His coming, the light of faith was dim and uncertain, for darkness covered the earth and a mist the people. Spiritually man was then like a helpless ship flying before the storm through inky darkness. It was the period of the world's triumph and of time's cruelest sway. True, the faithful, the earthly Jerusalem, never wholly disappeared, but oh! so few they were, so small the city of God. God's light shone earthward then as frequently does the sun in springtime, illumining one small patch of earth and leaving all around in shadow. Ignorance and idolatry hung like mists over the Gentile world, but a still blacker cloud, obstinate unbelief, enveloped the Jews. They had seen the patriarchs and heard the prophets; the Scriptures were their own; angels had visited them, and often had they had audience of their King Jehovah; they were God's very own, and yet when He came unto His own, His own received Him not, but denied and crucified Him. Nor is their perverse obstinacy lessened as time goes on. They have seen the prophecies fulfilled in Christ, the miracles He and His followers wrought, the pagans Christianized, the miraculous frustration of the Apostate Julian's attempt to rebuild Jerusalem, themselves without a nation, temple or priesthood, dispersed, despised, and subjugated—all this they have seen and yet thick darkness covers them. Less dense by far the mists that overhung us Gentiles, which lifted quickly when

the light had come, and the glory of the Lord had risen on us. Our conversion had been prophesied but utterly lost sight of, as witness the astonishment of the Apostles when the Holy Ghost descended on the newly-baptized Gentiles. But the Lord is God of Jew and Gentile both. That all flesh should see the salvation of God was the object of His coming. But first He came unto His own, but immediately on finding the Jewish homes and hearts of Bethlehem closed to Him, He summoned the Gentile kings to do Him homage. The star that led them was the first tiny ray to penetrate the gloom of paganism. Its apparition was the first skirmish between the powers of light and darkness, of faith and the world. The light was first vouchsafed to kings, not because kings are the primal objects of divine solicitude or readiest to follow God's leadings, but because the order of Providence is that the higher angels should illumine the lower, and the lower angels man through the highest to the lowest. But alas! the Father's will is not always done on earth as it is in heaven, and hence, notwithstanding the Magi's prompt response, it was not until three centuries later, when the apparition of the cross led Constantine and his forces to victory, that the Gentile kings turned to the new Jerusalem and walked in the brightness of its rising. Meantime, the Lord's glory had shone on the Apostles, and through them as through a many-sided prism, the light had been diffused among the nations. The Church in turn became the light of the world, and people flocked to

her as do the insects to the arc lamp. Amid the doubts and contentions of philosophic schools, she served the Gentiles as does the beacon light the benighted and storm-tossed mariners. The multitudes were converted to Christ and the strength of the Gentiles came to Him, showing forth praise to the Lord by gifts not of gold and frankincense, but of believing and faithful hearts. Especially blessed were the Gentile poor, for though they had not seen they believed more readily than the Jews, and having once come to Christ they clung to Him more perseveringly than the Magi. The common people are Christ's chosen ones; He became one of us, from us He chose His Apostles, among us He made His first converts. That with and through the lowly began His conquest of the world, proclaims both God's omnipotence and the superior aptitude for heaven of the humble. They are the good soil unchoked by weeds and thorns; they are the dry wood which readily catches the heaven-sent fire and spreads the conflagration. The rich and mighty, on the contrary, hiss and groan like a sapling amid the flames. They are like doves trying to soar with wings defiled by pitch. The poor man puts aside the world as readily as he does his coat, but for the rich, it is like tearing off their skin. They are the world's slaves, as are all men except the faithful poor—poor in spirit. For mind you, poverty without faith is double slavery, since its victim carries the cross indeed—not the cross of Christ but that of the wicked thief. Having

man's natural craving for dominion, he vainly covets the worldly means he imagines necessary to the conquest of the world. In his efforts upward, he grasps at earthly things, but the tighter he clutches them the more he finds them escaping like sea-sand through his fingers. Had he but faith to know Christ and His Apostles, and the ways and means whereby they overcame the world, he would learn that as water rises to its own level, so, only he who humbles himself shall be exalted, only he whom God commends shall share the victory. The point at issue between the world and God is whether man shall live for this life or the next, and where by faith we take our stand with Christ and publicly confess Him before men in word and deed, we achieve, besides an earthly victory, a claim to a heavenly triumph when Christ shall confess us before His Father who is in heaven. Thus besides conquering this world we do violence to, and carry by storm, the world to come. In the eight Beatitudes are catalogued the weapons of our warfare. By pride was man's dominion o'er the world lost and his right to heaven forfeited, but we by meekness regain possession of the earth, and by poverty of spirit and a willingness to suffer persecution for justice's sake, we reopen the kingdom of heaven. Our weapons are virtues that follow belief in Christ, or briefly, that is the victory which overcometh the world—our faith.

Brethren, the conquest of the world by faith is a victory, yes! but like all victories, sadly incomplete. For continued warfare is the price of victory, and

besides many have fallen, many have deserted, and many have been taken prisoners by the enemy. Once at least in a lifetime there comes to every soul sufficient light to show that its duty is to be up and doing in the cause of Christ, and where much light is given much activity is expected. But very often the most favored respond less promptly than the heretic or heathen, so that the first becomes last and the last first. The Jewish priests, for instance, well versed in scriptural lore, had little difficulty in answering Herod's query as to where the Saviour should be born. The entire history of God's intercourse with man, the figures of the Redeemer and the Messianic prophecies, had been the study of their lives, yet when confronted with the actual event they not only failed to spread the light but even tried to suppress the truth. In Bethlehem of Juda, said they, the Saviour should be born, but though assured the hope of ages had arrived and though best qualified to test the fact, they neither stirred themselves to investigate nor deigned to set forth further particulars to guide the popular judgment. They played the part of finger posts, pointing the road to Bethlehem but failing to lead the way. They, with all Jerusalem were troubled, and took the announcement ill. What! turn their backs on the Temple with its imposing sacrifices and time-honored ritual, abandon the traditions of their fathers, give up their lucrative employment and honorable position in society, forfeit the good will of Herod—and all for what? To enlist, perhaps, in the service of the great temporal

ruler Israel hoped for? No, but to go over to a despised hamlet and fall down in adoration before an infant in a manger. Ah! Brethren, how many individuals, aye, how many nations are kept from the true faith by similar considerations! Many a minister of a national establishment, many a highly-salaried preacher embarrassed with a family, is deterred from embracing Catholicity only by worldly motives. Though Catholic at heart, the rich and mighty often hide their faith through fear of being lowered socially, while the lower social grades are made or kept non-Catholic by self-interest, ancestral prejudice, or ignorance and indifference about the truth. But many, many more, alas! neglect the call to faith because they find like Herod that faith runs counter to their vices. When Stephen preached the faith, his hearers gnashed their teeth at him. When men possessed of demons were brought to Christ for cure, the devils howled and spat and raged at Him and tore and lashed their victims into fury before abandoning dominion over them. So, too, the wicked of to-day oppose the faith of Christ, and Herod-like they fain would stamp it out by measures quite as drastic as the slaughter of the Innocents. Especially dangerous are the enemies within the fold, the hypocrites, who while seemingly anxious to follow and adore the Christ, are really hounding Him to death by the scandal of their lives. As warm water is most easily congealed, so a pervert makes the fiercest bigot. They believe for a while, but in time of temptation they fall away, and their last state

becomes worse than the first. No man putting his hand to the plough and turning back is worthy of the kingdom of God. "Go," said Christ to the adulterous woman, "go and sin no more lest something worse befall thee." The higher up one stands, the greater his fall if he stumble, and a relapse is always worse than the original illness. So, too, apostasy in word or deed is more grievous than even infidelity or heresy, "for," says St. Peter, "it were better for a man never to have known the truth than after he hath known it to turn away."

Brethren, faith's triumph over the world, though marred by these reverses, is still a glorious victory. "All power is given to Me," says Christ, "in heaven and on earth." That statue of Nabuchodonosor's dream was, according to Daniel, a figure of the world's principalities, and the stone cut out of the hillside without hands, which crushed the statue and afterwards became a great mountain and filled the whole earth, was Christ the Lord. He is the star of Jacob, which, once arisen, draws all to Himself. With His faithful sons and daughters ever at His side, He is so leading others from afar that whatever of humanity is best among the nations is already His. His victory is no carnal one, but with the eye of faith we can see that our prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is being daily answered, for the kingdom of God which is within us is being broadened day by day and more firmly established.

Brethren, let us be active in the fight, that we share the victory. Let us turn from whatever of unbelief

or sin or worldliness remain, and follow Christ as faithfully, as unquestioningly, as perseveringly as did the Magi. They had for guidance, besides the star, only Balaam's prophecy and dim traditions dating from Israel's captivity. But we, led by Christ Himself, walk in the noonday light of Gospel truth. Amid trials of faith we must not be discouraged, as neither were the Magi when the star disappeared. They were not scandalized at Christ's helplessness and poverty; nor should we be ashamed of our faith, though it be that of the lowly and the poor. Above all, if we have had the misery to temporarily leave our home in Christ by sin we must return another way, namely, by penance, and be assured that turning from Herod with all his works and pomps to join the kneelers round the crib, you will find there spiritual refreshment and heavenly peace of soul.

Brethren, there is a picture, familiar to many of you, called the Rock of Ages, which aptly sums up all I have said. In the midst of a troubled sea rises a cross of stone, with a white-robed figure clinging to it. The cross is the hand of the true Jesus, bidding time stand still. The sea is typical of time and the world, and the cross—the one thing rising superior to both, the one solid support to which humanity may cling—the cross proclaims that "this is the victory which overcometh the world—our faith."

First Sunday after Epiphany.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

"He grew in age and wisdom and grace with God and men."—Luke ii. 52.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Gospel silence. II. Reason. III. Church's liturgy.
I. Christ's knowledge: 1. Pupil's question. 2. Christ's development and ours. 3. Knowledge acquired, infused; possessed, applied.
II. Imperfect system: 1. Age without wisdom. 2. Wisdom without grace. 3. Crime against individual and society.
III. Remedy: 1. Church's enemies. 2. God and Cæsar. 3. Religious instruction and Holy Eucharist.
Per.: Result will be real Christians.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, in meditating on the mysteries of this holy season, nothing strikes one more forcibly or engenders greater surprise than the silence of the Evangelists concerning the earlier years of our divine Redeemer. After His return from Egypt to Nazareth in His seventh or eighth year, we lose all trace of Him until the beginning of His miracles in Cana of Galilee, in the thirtieth year of His age. True, we find Him momentarily appearing, at the age of twelve, in the Temple at Jerusalem, but with that solitary exception the Evangelists give us no information concerning His whole hidden life, other than that He went down to Nazareth with His parents and was subject to them. Now, this silence of the Gospels, it seems to me, was not merely accidental—it

was intentional and judicious. It betrays the Evangelists' keen appreciation of man's natural fondness for youth—of childhood's strong claim and firm hold on our affections. There is a beauty and a freshness about childhood and youth that thrills the observer through and through like the breath of spring, and in their presence our gladdened hearts grow young again,—they respond to it as the songsters to the springtime and the skipping lambs and the laughing brooks. No invitation needed to bring the ardent Christian into communion with the boy of Nazareth. He is the Christian's richest treasure, and thither tends the Christian's heart. No need of description and details. In meditation, better far than solid facts is the vivid imagery of an unfettered imagination. Each of us, I hope, has felt this inclination—to turn betimes from the world—from its sordid cares and bitter trials, to the joy and peace of Nazareth and the blessed companionship of our youthful Saviour. In obedience to this same tendency, the Church, too, in her ritual, lingers long and lovingly over her Lord's earlier years.

St. Luke, in the second chapter of his gospel sums up the hidden life of Our Saviour in these few words: "He increased in age and wisdom and grace before God and men." One day, lately, in Sunday-school, a bright pupil asked: "Did Our Lord ever go to school?" It was a simple question simply asked, but the answer involved a profound dogmatic difficulty. It is easy to understand how Our Lord, existing as God from eternity, was still in time conceived as man,

and progressed from childhood to youth and from youth to manhood by the same stages of bodily development as you or I. But we cannot suppose, without grave irreverence to His sacred personality, that He was less rich in wisdom and grace while in the womb of His Mother or the crib at Bethlehem, than when disputing in the Temple with the Doctors, or enunciating sublime truth in His Sermon on the Mount. Much less can we suppose Him to have ever suffered the indignity of having a mere mortal for His teacher. The mind and soul of the merely mortal, newly-born, is a virgin page—an unblown flower that opens slowly under the light and heat of the Sun of justice and truth. But even after the burden of the day and the heat, the most profound philosopher or zealous worker in the Lord's vineyard has succeeded, at best, in acquiring only a measure of wisdom and sanctity. But not so Our Lord; Abraham and Isaac and John the Baptist testified that, to Christ, wisdom and grace were given not according to measure, but that, being heir by Nature, He had a clear title from the beginning to the fulness of His divine inheritance. We, on the contrary, are heirs only by adoption and receive our talents, five, two, or one, at Our Master's option and each according to his proper ability. Christ was the head wherein are focused all the senses; we are but the members of His mystical body, endowed with one or other sense, and that imperfectly. From the first moment of its creation, Christ's human mind was in the actual possession and exercise of every branch of human knowledge, and

His soul adorned with every possible virtue. This is the teaching of the Scriptures. "Behold," says Jeremias, prophesying the coming of the Messias, "Behold, the Lord hath created a new thing on earth, a woman shall encompass a man." The prodigy was that the Virgin Mary bore in her womb the body, indeed, of a babe, but the mind and soul of a fully developed man. Elsewhere the prophet speaks of the Word made flesh as the flower from the root of Jesse, upon which, as dew, should descend the spirit of the Lord—the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and fortitude; the spirit of knowledge and piety; and He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. "The Word was made flesh," says St. John, "and we saw Him full of grace and truth." "In Him," says St. Paul, "were hidden all the treasures of wisdom." With the exception of Origen and St. Ambrose, all the great Doctors of the Church—St. Augustine, St. Epiphanius, St. Jerome and St. Bernard—all unite in teaching that Christ, during His mortal life, acquired neither knowledge nor virtue, because there was none He had not already possessed from the beginning. How then, I ask, are we to explain St. Luke's words that "Jesus increased in wisdom and grace before God and men"? We must distinguish between infused knowledge and knowledge acquired—between revelation and science. Infused knowledge comes directly from God without any effort on our part to attain it; acquired knowledge is the result of our own industry. Now, all the knowledge and sanctity of Christ's

human nature were infused into it by reason of the hypostatic union, whereby two natures were made to coalesce in the single personality of Our Saviour. But the possession of wisdom and grace is one thing and their practical application quite another; and so Our Lord may be said to have advanced in wisdom and grace according as He began to bring more and more into use the knowledge and virtues He previously enjoyed in abstract contemplation. "In Him," says St. Paul, "were hidden all the treasures of wisdom." In Him, in fact, was hidden the author of wisdom and sanctity, and His progress was His gradual manifestation to the world of His divinity. Not that there was any subjective change in Him, the change was entirely objective—on the part of the observers. The rising sun, for example, gives but a feeble light and little heat; higher still it becomes brighter and warmer; until from the zenith it sends down its most brilliant and scorching rays. It is ever the same sun, throwing off the same amount of light and heat, that rises in the east, that crosses the meridian, and disappears in the west. The change is in us—due to our change of position. So too, it was with the Sun of truth and justice, Christ Jesus our Lord. Ever the same, He still, at His conception, suffused with His truth and love only Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and John. He is born, and the illumined circle widens beyond the shepherds on the hillside. Brighter still, until even decrepit Simeon sees the light to the revelation of the Gentiles. Higher and brighter, until the Gentiles walk in His light and the kings in the

splendor of His rising. Into the dark aisles of the Temple and abroad through all the land until, lo! the zenith is reached and the world is amazed and men say, one to another, "never did man speak as this man." Such was Christ's manifestation of Himself —such His progress in wisdom and grace. And just as men, like roots under the sun, were beginning to rise heavenward, there came the dark hours of the Passion and death—the sun declined and sank and the mists settled down again; some, until the coming of the Paraclete, and some, alas! forever.

And Jesus increased in age and wisdom and grace with God and men. Brethren, it is deeply significant that in this model of all youth, youth's three graces—age, learning, and piety—are linked together as inseparable companions. It is an essentially imperfect system of education that proposes the development of only one faculty. If the body alone be educated, the result is, at best, an ignoble modern gladiator. More pernicious still is a mind illumined by knowledge with a heart uninflamed by the love of God and humanity. The light of the sun without its heat would be a positive curse, serving only, as it would, to reveal the horrors of a frozen world; and what heat, alone, would be without light may be judged from a concept of hell. St. Bernard, speaking of the co-education of mind and heart, says: "To be brilliant is vain; to be ardent is little; but to be both brilliant and ardent is perfect." John the Baptist, because he was a shining and burning light, was eulogized by Our Lord as the greatest born of woman; more than

a prophet—an angel. Lucifer, on the contrary, from an angel became a devil, because he burned not with God's love, but only shone with His splendor. Mind education is but a means toward the education of the heart, for what will a world of knowledge profit a man if he have not religion, if he love not his soul? Religion is an integral part of every perfect system of education. Not that we love science less, but religion more. Let no squeamish scruple bar to us the treasure house of pagan literature—of secular science and art. St. Paul, in his Epistle, quotes from the pagan Euripides and the poet Menander. Secular learning, of itself well worth study and research, enables us besides to snatch the sword from the enemies of religion and fight them with their own weapons. As did the Israelites to the Egyptians of old—we, by divine right, invade the realms of worldly wisdom and appropriate whatever we find of sterling worth or golden truth. None the less we maintain that education without religion is essentially imperfect, for when science leads to its highest attained point it is religion's function to become guide on and up to the very throne of God. To separate religion and science is to rob religion of her noblest ally, and put a dangerous weapon in irresponsible hands with no instruction as to its use. Such a system is a crime against the individual and the community. Each individual has an inborn right to the whole truth, but this system hides from him its better half. He studies a geography, for instance, from whose pages are cancelled the names or true significance of Bethlehem, Jeru-

salem, and Rome. He studies history—the history of the first centuries of our era, disregarding the influence on that age of Christ and Christianity; the history of the Middle Ages, with never a mention of those saviours of civilization, Saints Dominic and Francis of Assisi. Who can read the history of the sixteenth century and ignore St. Francis Xavier; of the seventeenth and leave out St. Vincent de Paul? In such a materialistic spirit are the arts and sciences cultivated nowadays, that from the exception it has become almost the rule for pupils in our higher universities to begin to doubt of the soul's immortality and the very existence of God. When such a mind turns to the study of Holy Scripture, what is the result? A blasphemous monster like Renan, who reviled Our Lord as an undutiful son for having never gone to school, for having run away from His parents, and rebelliously snubbed them for seeking to bring Him under control. A scholar without a conscience is a menace to society. Learning makes the criminal all the more insidious and dangerous. And even if he have no marked criminal tendencies, still, see how, in the hands of even the best of them, literature and art minister to sensuality, and philosophy is made to war against truth. The spoils of office become the chief motive for enlisting in the public service, and even so-called ministers of the Gospel degrade their sacred calling by pandering to the debased prejudices of their audiences, for filthy lucre. So true is it that, though a sound mind in a sound body be an inestimable blessing, still the soundness of neither one nor

the other can withstand the corrupting influences of this world, unless seasoned with the salt of the earth —the saving truth of true religion.

Brethren, the best efforts of every enemy of the Church, from Julian the Apostate down to the modern pseudo-patriot, have been directed to the divorce of religion and education. That alone, together with the woeful results attending the success of those efforts in the world to-day, should thoroughly convince us how important a lesson is the example of Christ's earlier years—how criminal it is for any man or set of men to put asunder what God hath joined together. Those of us whom love or duty interest in the training of youth, should take this lesson well to heart and see to it that our charges, while giving to Cæsar in time and attention the things that are Cæsar's, should not neglect the still more important duty of giving to God and religion the things that are God's. Of the many means to this end, I will mention only two—first, to seize on every opportunity for directing the children's minds heavenward; and second, to insist on the frequentation of the sacraments. Teach them, mornings, to light the fire of God's love in their hearts by prayer; and at night, by prayer, to go to sleep on the bosom of God. God is the light of the world and, to be illumined by Him, one must turn towards Him. Public worship on the Lord's day and religious instruction in Sunday-school, help to lift the soul of the child out of the shadow of earthly things into the clear light of a higher and better world. By such pious exercises,

their whole being is purified and beautified, as was Christ when He prayed on Thabor—when the shape of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and glittering. But most important of all is to receive regularly what, of right, should be our daily bread—the Holy Eucharist—the Author of truth and virtue, that the children, living, not they, but Christ in them, may become other Christs, increasing in age and wisdom and grace with God and men.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

THE NAMES OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH.

"*They called His name Jesus.*"—Luke ii. 21.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Shakespeare. II. Shakespeare again. III. Longfellow.
I. Joseph: 1. Patriarch. 2. Saint. 3. Happy death.
II. Mary: 1. Prototypes. 2. Queen, illumined. 3. Sea of bitterness.
III. Jesus: 1. Origin: 1. God-given names. 2. Figures of Jesus. 3. Real Jesus.
2. Meaning: 1. "God." 2. "Jesus" or Emmanuel. 3. Olive oil, poured out.
3. History: 1. Royal christening. 2. Jesus and John. 3. Influence for good, evil.
Per.: 1. Higher blessedness. 2. Invoke. 3. In deed and in truth.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, so portentous an event was the coming of the Messias, so minutely prophesied, so replete with mystic meaning, that every single circumstance connected therewith has its own peculiar significance. Not least significant is His choice of a name and that name Jesus. "What's in a name?"

asks Shakespeare, "that which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." For once, at least, his philosophy is at fault. For, as on second thought, he adds: "A good name in man or woman is the immediate jewel of their souls. Who steals my purse steals trash, but he that filches from me my good name, robs me of that which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed." Take away from the Christian world the saving names of Jesus and Mary and Joseph, and you dash the sun from the firmament, you snatch the moon from her nightly vigils, and deprive the storm-tossed mariner of his guiding star. So true is it, as Longfellow remarks, that these sacred names forever stand a landmark and a symbol of the power that lies concentrated in a single word.

Joseph—the name speaks to us of old and new. Of Joseph, patriarch, erstwhile the lowliest of his brethren but soon become by virtue and by wisdom next to Pharao the mightiest in the kingdom; the guardian of the king and his treasures, whose chaste intent, abhorring carnal pleasure, applied itself solely to garner in the fruits of seven years of plenty that he might become, ere long, the saviour of his famished people. Of Joseph, saint, humble, yet of men second only to the Man-God, model of chastity and protector of the Virgin of virgins and Virginity Incarnate, and ruler, withal, of that treasury—the Holy Family—from whose accumulated merits the Christian world has been enriched. Though but a word, it vividly portrays an ideal

Christian life and recalling besides the picture of Joseph breathing his last in the arms of Jesus and Mary, it enables us to realize how truly blessed in the sight of God is the death of God's saints.

Mary,—the angel called her Ave Maria. Ave—it is Eva's name spelled backwards. Ave undid the evils Eva wrought. Eva filled the world with the thorns of human afflictions; Mary caused the flowers to reappear in our land. Eva plunged our Nature into sin and death; Mary lifted it to the very throne of God. Her other name, Maria, spells the initials of Mary, Anna, Ruth, Judith and Abigail. Like Mary, sister of Moses, she led us out of the land of bondage through the sea of this sinful world, herself dry-shod and without a stain. The child of her prayers she gave, like Anna, freely to the Lord. She is that Ruth whose loving heart recked not of home nor country, but only of her people and her Lord. She is that Judith who slew man's bitterest foe when she crushed the serpent's head. By her eloquent beauty she, like Abigail, so touched the king's heart that wrath turned to mercy and he spared her people. Maria,—the name is variously interpreted. It means first of all, "a Queen;" and how truly was she a queen who bore and nursed and ruled, with a mother's gentle authority, the King of kings and the Lord of lords! Again, it means "Illumined," for Mary is to the Saviour as the sun to the moon. The same halo surrounds Mary and the Child in her arms. If a brief vision of God on Mount Sinai made the face of Moses shine as the

sun, so that the people could not bear to gaze on him, what shall we say of Mary who, for thirty long years, basked in the smiles of the Saviour? Again, it means a "sea of bitterness," but, though such was her life on earth, she has since risen above the horizon and become the fair Star of the Ocean. Fair and pure and lovely is Mary—our tainted Nature's solitary boast.

Brethren, the names of Mary and Joseph, like their personalities, have no terrors for us, but we approach with equal awe the person and the name of Jesus. "Without the grace of the Holy Ghost," says St. Paul, "it cannot be even worthily pronounced." When God confers a name it always expresses the mission of the person named. Thus, Adam means the father of the living; Abram was changed to Abraham because his destiny was to be the father of many nations; and Simon became Peter, or the rock whereon Christ built His Church. How full of meaning, then, must the name Jesus be, since it sums up the mission of the Saviour of the world! Three men, before Our Lord, had borne that name. The son of Sirach and the son of Jasedech; the one a seer, a priest the other, prefigured each the wisdom of the father and the priest forever according to the order of Melchisadech. A more striking figure still, is Jesus or Josue Nave—the immortal, as his name implies, but still a figure only of the Christ, the true immortal. Christ's it was, not merely to guide the people to a promised land on earth, but to lead the way to the kingdom of heaven. Not merely the

walls of Jericho, but the very foundations of the Roman empire were shaken and shattered by the trumpets' blasts that blew at His command—the voices of His Apostles preaching the new dispensation. Josue in the throes of battle bade the sun stand still, and called down rocks and hail from heaven on his enemies; but when Christ overcame His enemies by His death on the cross, the sun fled from the heavens and even the graves cast up their dead. They bore His name, these men of old, but that name in them, as they of Christ, was but the shadow of the reality.

Brethren, to Christian ears the Saviour's name sounds more sacred even than the name of God. The interpretations of this name, God, are manifold; but principally it means one that sees or one that runs, as a consuming fire. The name as such can rightly signify only the one true God, for false gods are seen but see not, while ours sees and is not seen. Not only does He see, but by His grace and providence He runs to our assistance as a mother to her tottering babe. Irresistible is His coming, as a conflagration cast upon the earth and ever tending heavenward. Now, all this Jesus' name implies, and something more. The first three letters stand for God; the other two for His body and soul,—for our humanity. It, therefore, signifies something more than God—it means Emmanuel or God with us, or God incarnate. It teaches us a deep dogmatic truth, that man, indeed, redeemed the fall of man; but had not He been man and God alike, He never could

have conquered death by death, and led captivity captive. Jesus, then, means Saviour, because, as St. Matthew says, "He saved the people from their sins." Saviour both in time and from eternity—Saviour of men and angels too, for, says tradition, "'twas homage to the future Christ the Father chose, wherewith to test the angels' loyalty," and Luke relates His name was called Jesus—Saviour—which He was called by the angel ere He was conceived in the womb. Christ, then, was always Saviour, and Jesus is an eternal name. Thus it is we soon forget our awe of the divinity hidden in the humble Saviour. He is one of us and His sacred name, on second thought, sounds sweet: "sweeter," as the Psalmist says, "than the honey and the honey-comb." The Canticle of Canticles compares the name of the Lord pronounced, to olive oil poured out. How beautiful are the scriptural figures! That sacred name like the oil lights and heats—lights us to God's truth and inflames us with His love. To learn that name, to be saturated with it as with oil, to be rendered inflammable by it ere the coming of the spirit of fire, was the pagan's first step towards Christianity. Like oil again that name is a spiritual food, nourishing and refreshing, and a wholesome condiment for every action of our lives. "Whatever ye do," says St. Paul, "in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Again, it is, like oil, a lubricant, minimizing the bitter cares and the friction of this world. It is, besides, a healthful medicine. How many a poor, sorely-

wounded wayfarer, abandoned on the highway between the Jericho of this world and the heavenly Jerusalem, has been restored to life and hope by the elixir of that name, as was the robbers' victim by the good Samaritan's wine and oil. "Amen, I say to you," says Christ, "if you ask the Father for anything in My name He will give it to you." Let the miracles it has wrought attest the curing power of that name. Let him attest—the cripple from his mother's womb, by the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, whom Peter and John, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, caused to rise and walk; let him give testimony—the blind man, by the walls of Jericho, who had his sight restored because he shouted to the passing Saviour, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Witness they from whose bodies the Apostles, in pursuance of His promise, cast out devils in His name; witness they from whose souls Christ's ministers, in later years, expelled the demons of sin; let these and countless others testify how true are Peter's words that there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be healed and saved.

Brethren, to prove to you the dignity of Jesus' sacred name it will suffice to briefly trace its history. What pomp and ceremony accompany the christening of a royal babe, and yet, how paltry that compared to the naming of the Prince of peace. From heaven to earth, the King of kings sent Gabriel, the highest in His court, to Mary, daughter of a royal line, to name a child—a God-man—who was

to conquer and to save the world. There is a sharp antithesis between the insidious serpent whispering to Eve, and the angel of light declaring unto Mary that, after all, humanity was to be not merely like to God, knowing good and evil, but should be God Himself. John the Baptist said of himself and Christ: "My name must decrease, but His must increase." Hence, John was born at the summer solstice when Nature begins to wither and the days grow shorter, but Christ came at the winter solstice when begin to return the light and the life of the world. John's name was like a strain of music dying away in the distance, but Jesus', though its first mention was as soft and low as an angel's whisper, swelled into a grand crescendo until it filled the whole world. To Mary first, as first redeemed, that name, that tidings of great joy was first revealed, and then to all the people. Its spiritual meaning, Saviour, is kept ever to the fore, even in the Temple where, at the circumcision, it was first officially conferred, and where, for the first time, the Redeemer shed His blood. Since then the history of that name has been the history of the Saviour and of Christianity. Who shall estimate the vital factor it has been for good and sometimes alas! for evil in the affairs of men! How many a soul, amid temptations, doing battle for its life, has found that name as Solomon calls it: "a tower of strength"! How many a soul already dead has been by it restored to life! What favors have been through it obtained, what miracles it has wrought! How many sins crying to heaven for

vengeance have had their voices stilled by a single invocation of that name! The tender youth and gentle virgin and aged martyr went bravely to the lions and the stake, encouraging one another with that name; or, like the Apostles, went forth from the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. And then alas! for how many has it proved a rock of scandal set for their ruin, and a sign that should be contradicted and blasphemed! But for many, oh, let us hope for many, many more it has been a saving factor in their lives, from the moment when first 'twas lisped by their childish prattle until it trembled on their dying lips. Ah! no wonder saints have burned it on their breasts; no wonder JHS, its monogram, confronts us on the altar and falls in vivid colors from the stained windows to the floor; for Jesus is a name above every name, at the mention of which every knee should bend on earth, in heaven, and in hell.

Brethren, Jesus means Saviour, Emmanuel or God with us. "The Lord is with thee," the angel said to Mary, and hence he called her blessed. It is our rare privilege to be accounted blessed, if we will, in a higher and a nobler sense. "Yea, rather," says Our Lord, "more blessed still are they who hear the word of God and keep it." Next to our worship of the Divinity, a proper reverence for His sacred name is the gravest precept of religion. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain," is the second of the ten commandments. Reverence, then, that name, remembering St. Paul's promise to the

Romans, that "whosoever shall reverently call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Reverently, I say, for says Our Lord: "not every man that calls Me Lord, Lord, shall be saved, but only he that does My Father's will." Invoke His name, not alone in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth. A virtuous career is a lifelong invocation of the Lord, and the surest pledge that our names will be enrolled beneath the sacred names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in the illuminated book of life.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

SUBMISSION TO ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY.

"*Be not wise in your own conceits.*"—Rom. xii. 16.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex. : I. Epistles and Gospels. II. To-day's. III. Docility.
I. Self-conceit : 1. In general. 2. The Romans. 3. St. Paul's reproof.
II. Submission : 1. Child and man. 2. Christ's example and teaching. 3. Leper, Centurion.
III. Naaman's : 1. History and disease. 2. Cure. 3. Giezi.
Per. : 1. Swimming. 2. Stephen. 3. Degrees of docility.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, the arrangement of those passages of Scripture which constitute the Epistles and Gospels of the various Sundays dates from the early ages of Christianity, when the word of God was studied more deeply and more reverently than it is to-day. It is but natural, therefore, to expect, and it is an interesting and profitable exercise

to trace, in them a continuity of ideas and to discover their appropriateness for the Sundays to which they have been assigned. The present Sunday affords an excellent example. Epiphany time is devoted to the contemplation of those earlier years of Our Lord's hidden life, whose history the Evangelist summarizes thus: "Jesus went down to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, and was subject to them." Docility, then, is the season's lesson, and quite appropriately the undercurrent of thought running uninterruptedly through the Epistle and Gospel is the lesson of docility. "Be not wise in your own conceits," says St. Paul to the Romans. "Go," says Christ to the leper just cleansed, "Go, show thyself to the priests, and offer the gift commanded by Moses for a testimony to them." "Lord, I am not worthy," cries the centurion, "not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word and my servant shall be healed."

Brethren, that law of Nature whereby parents cherish so great love for their offspring holds good also in the realm of thought, and explains why the human mind is so vain of its own ideas and the individual so tenacious of his own opinions. How shallow was the philosophy of the so-called reformers is nowhere more clearly evidenced than in the fact that they hoped to hold together a system of religion based on the right of private judgment. But that differences should arise between man and man, were a small matter did not man at times carry his conceit so far as to oppose his opinions to the decrees of God.

If there was one thing more than any other on which the pagan Romans prided themselves, it was their strict sense of justice. In their conquest of the world this trait is continually evidenced in their harsh methods of overcoming opposition on the one hand, and on the other, their religious toleration and general magnanimity toward the vanquished. So self-wise were they in this regard that Roman converts to Christianity were slow to believe that even Christ could give them a higher ideal. St. Paul, therefore, reproves their vanity: "Be not wise," he says, "in your own conceits, for worldly wisdom is folly with God, and what is foolishness with the world is wisdom with God. Worldly justice is: evil for evil, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but the law of God teaches us to be at peace with all men, to leave revenge to the Lord, to overcome evil with good, to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us and to pray for them that persecute us."

Brethren, in the third chapter of his epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul says: "As long as the heir is a child he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father." Not less obstinate than the Roman were the Galatian converts, who, being Jewish, clung tenaciously to the observances of the synagogue. Accordingly St. Paul chides them, arguing that as the Old Law bears the same relation to the New that childhood does to manhood, therefore for Christians to continue in Jewish practices is as ridiculous as for a grown man to find amuse-

ment in childish toys. Paul's argument is as applicable to us as to the Galatians, for what Jews were in this respect to Christians, we are to the blessed in heaven. Sons of God though we be, and co-heirs with Christ to the kingdom of heaven, still as long as we remain on earth, we are but as children, differing nothing from servants, subject to spiritual tutors and governors until the time appointed by our heavenly Father. Even should we live to maturity or old age, God's design is that we continue as children still—children in docility, in obedience, in humility. Christ lived to the age of thirty-three, yet we nowhere read of His emancipation. As a babe unborn He deferred to the decree of Augustus Cæsar; newly-born, He submitted to the rite of circumcision; as boy, youth, and man, He was subject to Mary and Joseph; He paid tribute to Cæsar and practised and counselled obedience to even the Scribes and Pharisees in all things lawful, and finally He allowed Himself to be led like a lamb to the slaughter. Though He passed through all the stages of life from infancy to manhood, He never outgrew the docility of childhood. That is the lesson His life holds for us, the lesson mankind so much needs and finds so hard to learn, the lesson He sought to teach when, taking a little child and placing him before the Apostles, He said: "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." The disciple is not above His master, and if we be not meek and humble of mind and heart, we are not true followers of Christ. We should recognize our limitations, feel-

ing that, being during our earthly life as minors unsound of judgment and feeble of will, we need guidance and instruction, until such time as reason and faith shall have merged into the beatific vision, and our wills become one with the Divine, free with the freedom of the children of God. When impatient of delay and tempted to reason and choose independent of authority, it is well for us to learn of the birds and flowers to await the time appointed by the Father, for the unfledged, if too venturesome, fall to earth, and the too early shoots are nipped by the lingering frost. Many of us accept Christianity, yes, but with reserve, on our own terms, and only in so far as it coincides with our own ideas. Our worship of God, we feel, should be free, spontaneous, in spirit and in truth, untrammelled by rites and ceremonies. Why one form of prayer rather than another? Why worship only in sacred places? Why this bowing and genuflecting and signing with the cross? Why these complicated sacramental ceremonies? Such may have been John's thought when he hesitated to baptize the Messias, but Christ bade him proceed: "For thus," said He, "it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." To say nothing of Christ's words to His Church: "He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me and Him that sent Me," her ritual, even in those parts not of divine origin, has been sanctified by the practice of ages. Though divine, the Church is still a society of men for men, and could no more accomplish her earthly mission without external forms than could

a soul accomplish its earthly mission without its body. What reverence for these forms does Christ inculcate in the leper's cure! In the fourteenth chapter of Leviticus are set forth the rites employed in the official cleansing of a leper—washings, ceremonies and sacrifices most complex, lasting no less than eight days. The leper in question (for that he was self-willed is evident from his disobediently blazing abroad the miracle) may have thought: "Why show myself to the priests, or lose time and money in useless forms, now that my cure is beyond all doubt?" But it was not his to question but to obey, even as it was not his to inquire why the Lord, in effecting his cure, preferred to employ the seemingly needless ceremonies of stretching forth His hand and touching him and saying: "I will, be thou made clean." So, too, a penitent duly absolved may think it is useless labor to afterwards confess sins inadvertently omitted, yet such is the Church's law, and as a true Christian and soldier of Jesus Christ he is bound to unquestioningly obey. The bluff soldier of Capharnaum, the centurion, pagan though he was, is a striking example of respect for authority. Verily, he was the noblest Roman of them all! He was a commanding officer of the local garrison, a God-fearing man, who, though a Gentile, was so strongly attracted by the religion of Israel that he had built a synagogue for the Jews of Capharnaum. An attendant whom he loved, a Jew probably, grown old in his service, was ill of the palsy, and the centurion, deeming himself unworthy to approach the Christ, sent the elders of the synagogue to beg for a cure. To his amaze-

ment they brought back word that Jesus was coming forthwith. What! the great Prophet defile Himself by entering a Gentile house! Put Himself out to come so far! Obey his call like one of his own soldiers! In haste a messenger was sent to beg the Saviour not to trouble Himself, and as He still persisted in coming, the abashed centurion met Him at his gate crying: "Lord, forgive me my apparent presumption. I am a man accustomed to exercise authority, saying to one: 'Come,' and he cometh, and to another: 'Do this,' and he doth it, but far be it from me to even seem to command Thy services. Lord, I am not even worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word and my servant shall be healed." It was a complete surrender of his will to Christ's will. Knowing how to command, he had not forgotten how to obey; exacting proper humility in others, he could be humble in the presence of his own superiors. What noble characters are often evolved by a course of military discipline! When once converted, what fervent, what humble, what blindly obedient Catholics unbelievers become! One knows not what should be the greatest: our regret that so many pure and honest souls are outside the pale of Israel, our gratitude that God takes heed of them and will bring them from the East and the West into His heavenly kingdom, or our dread lest we, His unworthy children, be cast out into exterior darkness.

Brethren, in the fifth chapter of the fourth book of Kings is a charming story in which to-day's scriptural readings and the lessons they convey are caught

up like disconnected threads and woven into one—the story of Naaman the Syrian. Naaman was commander-in-chief of the Syrian army and a prime favorite at the court of his sovereign. He had fought and bled in his country's cause and repelled the attacks of the neighboring Israelites. But with all his glory and wealth he was most unhappy, for under his rich uniform he hid a loathsome leprosy. His position in the army and at court he still retained, for his malady was in its initial stages and known only to his heartbroken wife and sympathetic king. Now, in one of their border raids the Syrians took some Israelites prisoners, and among them a little girl who became maid to Naaman's wife. In one of those confidences not uncommon between mistress and servant, the little one learned of her master's affliction, and promptly declared that if he would but go to the great prophet Eliseus, in her dear native land, he would certainly be cured. How often the true faith or the grace of God finds an entrance to the homes of the unbelieving or the wicked through the word or example of a pure, honest and devout Catholic maid! Verily, God hath sent them into exile for the conversion of the nations, and hath revealed to these little ones truths which He hath hid from the worldly-wise and prudent. His wife told Naaman and Naaman told the king, with the result that presently the commander-in-chief departed with a troop of cavalry and $60,000, and a letter from his king to the king of Israel. The latter on the cavalcade's arrival was much disturbed, suspecting that the Syrian's request of such

an impossible thing as the cure of leprosy was but a pretext for renewing the war. But Eliseus, hearing of what was passing, sent to the king saying, "Send the man to me that he may know there is a prophet in Israel." The prophet lived with old Giezi, his man-servant, outside the town in a little cabin, before which the Syrian troop presently drew rein. By and by Giezi came forth with the prophet's message, bidding Naaman proceed some thirty miles farther to the banks of the Jordan where, after washing seven times, he would be healed. Then was Naaman angry, and turning about he started for home saying: "I thought the prophet himself would have come out to me, and invoked his God, and touched my leprosy with his hand and healed me. And why wash in the Jordan? Are not our Syrian rivers better than all the waters of Israel?" Naaman was willing to accept a favor from Israel's prophet and Israel's God, and he had come prepared to pay for it, and now to be treated as a person of no account and to be asked to do such silly things! He was indignant and mortified. But Eliseus knew the man's pride and conceit and that the first necessity was to humble him, for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. When non-Catholics of great wealth or education or social influence join our faith, they not infrequently come to us in the spirit of Naaman, feeling they are honoring the Church and should be lionized accordingly. Pretentious Catholics are sometimes similarly disposed, and the pity of it is that they often find clerical sycophants to suit their

humor. Self-wise or purse-proud, they think the Church should come out to them, strain her dogmas and discipline to suit their advanced ideas and lofty station, invoke her God for them in polished phrases, and remove their moral leprosies by some means more dramatic than the humble confessional and the prosy devotions of the vulgar herd. Are not the rivers of Syria better than all the waters of Israel? Are not, say they, the cultivation of the arts and sciences and of letters and a high standard of culture more conducive to morality than the Church's tedious rites and ceremonies? Thus they would fain accept the essentials of religion without its accessories, and dictate to the Church and to the Lord which shall be and which shall not be the channels of His grace. They err, being wise in their own conceits, for says Samuel: "The Lord came, and a great wind rent the mountains before Him, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, a still small voice and the Voice was the Lord." Just such a voice came to Naaman, now grown calm, when one of his officers approaching said: "Master, had the prophet asked something great of thee, all thy treasure, or some great achievement, thou hadst complied; why not do the little he asks?" It was the expression of his own better afterthought, and immediately turning he rode to the Jordan, where having washed seven times, his flesh was cleansed and restored as the flesh of a little child. So, too, sanctity

follows the unquestioning acceptance of religion in its entirety. Full of faith and gratitude, Naaman returned to the man of God and laid his riches at his feet, but not a penny would Eliseus accept. There are some things that riches cannot buy or power command; certain blessings the only proper return for which is that ancient sacrifice, a humble and a contrite heart. That Naaman laid such a heart among his other treasures at the prophet's feet is clearly evident, although, being a novice in the faith of Israel, his humility was as blundering as was his pride. Doubtless he was again disappointed at not being permitted to square his account with the Lord, but it was one more reading of the lesson to him and to us, that obedience is better than sacrifice, that the Lord judgeth not as man judgeth, that if we presume to dictate to the Lord or His Church in religious matters, our efforts are likely to result in the adoration of a golden calf and the breaking of the tables of the law which the Church, like another Moses, brings down to us from the mount of God. Simon Magus sought to purchase with gold the gifts of God, and unworthy ministers of the Church have tried at times to sell God's gifts as Giezi did, with a like result. For Giezi, the prophet's servant, coveted Naaman's wealth, and after his departure, stealing out he overtook him and asked in the prophet's name for a talent of silver and two changes of raiment. Naaman forced on him double what he asked, and Giezi, returning, hid away his treasure and to Eliseus' question denied having been abroad. But the prophet said:

"Was not I present in spirit when the man turned back and gave thee the money and garments? And now thou art rich, but the leprosy of Naaman shall stick to thee, and to thy seed forever. And," concludes the text, "the old servant went out from him a leper as white as snow." If the faithful cannot purchase exemption from the laws of God and the Church, neither can the Church sell that exemption without incurring moral leprosy.

Brethren, the Redeemer bent Himself low down to raise us from the depths of our iniquities, but He raised us only to the surface, leaving to ourselves the task of striking out and swimming to the heavenly shore. And should we turn our eyes backward or downward to view with complaisance our skill or the height of our ascent, be sure a dizziness will seize us and we shall lose our way. Our gaze should cling as longingly as the dying Stephen's to the coveted shore, and to every buoy, even the smallest, set to guide us landward. There are three degrees of docility, submission to superiors, to equals and to inferiors, and if the Lord of lords practised them all, even the third and highest, is it unreasonable that we should be asked to exercise at least the first and the lowest? Be not wise therefore in your own conceits, but go show yourselves dutifully to your priests and offer them the reverence and obedience due them as the ministers of God. When tempted to be critical of your Church and her rites and ceremonies, humbly bow your head and murmur: "Lord, I am not worthy." Thankfully accept and use her time-honored, as well

as her divinely instituted, means of sanctification, and have no fear but that your leprosy will be cleansed and your soul become once more as the soul of a little child. In a word: "Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God that in the day of His visitation He may exalt you" (1 Peter v. 6).

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

SUICIDE.

"*Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith.*"—Matt. viii. 26.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Process of despair. II. Popular sentiment. III. Church's stand.

I. Fifth command: 1. Suicide is murder. 2. Worse. 3. God sole arbiter of life and death.

II. Crime: 1. Against Nature and society. 2. Self-preservation. 3. Scandal and cowardice.

III. Causes and remedies: 1. Judas. 2. Materialism. 3. Christian education.

Per.: The restraining influence of Christianity.

SERMON.

"IF God so bounteously feedeth the fowls of the air, if He so gorgeously clotheth the flowers of the field, how much more you, O ye of little faith!"

Loss of faith in God's protecting providence, loss of love for God and humanity, loss of strength to endure life's temptations and hardships, consequent sins innumerable and revolting crimes, no joy in the present, no hope for the future, despair and a suicidal death, these are the rounds in the fatal stairway by which many a poor soul has gone down to hell forever. There is something simply awful in the grow-

ing tendency of the modern individual to take in hand the precious gift of life and fling it back in the face of his Creator. A growing tendency, I say, for as society gradually and logically resolves itself into its two great moral constituents, Catholicity and Infidelity, the out-and-out infidel becomes more numerous and more reckless, and his final symptom, the suicidal mania, assumes a more intense form. Witness in our own country the steady flow of thousands from Protestantism into absolute infidelity, and witness at the same time the hundreds and thousands of these same men and women, aye, and children, too, who annually launch themselves violently into eternity. So much of an institution has self-destruction become that the suicide is extolled as a hero, weak-minded women shower sentiment and flowers on his casket, weak-kneed ministers pour out their sickening eulogies, and even wise men and good shake their heads and say: "Poor fellow, there was nothing else left for him to do; his last act was the redeeming feature of his life." Why, there actually exist societies of men, bound, in certain events, to suicide by oath. Last week one of our leading dailies asserted that neither from Scripture nor from reason can suicide be proved unlawful. Out west a monster of a woman recommends self-destruction to the insane and deformed, and should they refuse, she urges they be murdered, even though the victims be her own children. Not long ago, in France, an army officer, degraded for high treason, found a sword and revolver placed ready in his cell, and thousands of French

apostates howled and gnashed their teeth at him, because he declined to redeem, as they thought, the national honor by taking his own life. The defaulter, the criminal brought to bay, sentimental lovers and seekers after notoriety, captains of sinking ships and generals of routed armies, and even men with every worldly advantage, but still tired of life, all seek in suicide a happy release, and are popularly extolled for their self-respect and bravery. Facts like these show the popular tendency.

But there is one institution, the Catholic Church, that takes a bold stand against this horrible modern mania. She spurns from her sanctuary and her consecrated soil, the vile body of the suicide, she bans his action as an outrage against society, against Nature and against God. She denounces him as a selfish coward, and while charitably recommending him to God's mercy in her private devotions, she neither entertains herself nor holds out to others much hope of his ultimate salvation. In a word, though from a popular standpoint there be crimes of a darker hue than suicide, there is none other by which from a Catholic standpoint a man so utterly renounces his religion and his God.

"Thou shalt not kill." Christ Himself tells us that all of the ten commandments are summed up in these two: "Thou shalt love God above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself;" "Thou shalt not kill," therefore, is but a negative way of asserting the positive duty of justice and love man owes to his fellowman. But not only to his fellowman, but also to him-

self does man owe this duty. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The one and the same law, therefore, equally forbids murder and self-destruction, and consequently the deliberate suicide is as guilty in the sight of God as the perpetrator of murder in the first degree. And since, as St. John says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," therefore, also whosoever desires to take his own life but stays his hand for some purely secular consideration, is a suicide in the sight of God and equally with the murderer forfeits, for the time at least, all claim to eternal life. Nay, more, suicide is more heinous even than murder. The nearer the relationship between the murderer and his victim the more revolting the crime. One citizen kills another; shocking! A man slays his brother; horrible! A mother strangles her child; demoniacal! A man commits suicide, embodying in his own person the red-handed destroyer and the writhing victim, and you will find no word in any language strong enough to fully express the hideous nature of his crime. Suicide is a direct usurpation of God's most exclusive prerogative, as sole arbiter of life and death. In the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, verse 39, God says, "I alone am, and there is no other God besides Me. I will kill and make to live. I will strike and I will heal, and there is none that can deliver out of My hands," and in the Book of Wisdom, chapter xvi., verse 13, Solomon exclaims, "It is Thou, O Lord, that hast power of life and death, and leadest down to the gates of death and bringest back again!" Since, then, the union of

spirit and matter, to form the composite man, is in nowise subject to man's choice, neither is his preservation in existence, which, after all, is but a continuation of the creative act. To assert that man, on attaining the use of reason and freedom of choice, may lawfully reject the gift of being, is to stultify the action of the Creator and arraign Him of tyrannous injustice in having afflicted us for years with existence without possibility of escape. Man is lord of the universe, yes, but his dominion over created things cannot be said to include his own life. In fact, dominion implying, as it does, two distinct terms, the possessor and the thing possessed, cannot possibly exist between factors so essentially one as man and his own being. Besides, the law of man's dominion over mundane things points, as to an end, to his own preservation in existence. Now, every schoolboy knows the ethical axiom, that the end of the law cannot fall under the law, and consequently no man can have over himself absolute powers of life and death. Man is for God, as the lower creatures are for man, and even as they acknowledge man's dominion, so must man acknowledge the dominion of God. God's words to the newly-created Adam are deeply significant. He placed him in the earthly paradise, "to dress it and to keep it," saying, "I have given you dominion over all creatures. Of the tree of life thou mayest eat, but of the tree of death thou must not eat." Man's function as high priest of the universe is not to destroy, but to preserve, not to disobey, like a faithless steward, the will of his master, and usurp his

rights, but to order all things through himself and with himself to God.

Brethren, suicide is a crime, not only against God, but also against Nature, and society. Every form of animal life, and even the members of the vegetable kingdom, instinctively resist destruction. Nature's primary law is self-preservation. Now, the natural law is simply the eternal law of God reflected in the instincts and judgments of His creatures. The light of the setting sun and its glowing reflection in the western ocean are not more identical than the natural law and the eternal law. Under Nature's guidance animals struggle for existence, nourish themselves, propagate their species, and in general strive to attain their highest material development. But the highest perfection of man, half animal, half angel as he is, involves the subordination of the natural to the supernatural, the making of his material nature into a kind of Jacob's ladder whereby his soul may climb to higher things. But though this elevating of the spirit above the flesh be praiseworthy in the spiritual sense, nothing will justify a man in separating his soul from his body in the literal sense, however exalted his motives. For life is the standing place, the fulcrum of all his efforts upward, and without life he would be as one who should attempt to stand on empty space and move the world. It is an eloquent commentary on the reasoning powers of many that irrational instinct is a safer guide, for brute beasts never destroy themselves, whereas the suicide is led by a mistaken judgment into irreparable misfortune to escape some

lesser evil. This proves, too, the absolute universality of Nature's first law, "preserve thyself," for self-destruction, after all, is but a mistaken means of self-preservation. But how, you ask, how do you explain these words of Ecclesiasticus, chapter xxx., verse 17, "Better is death than a bitter life, and everlasting death than continual sickness"? Brethren, many things highly desirable in themselves become evil when procured by unlawful means. The death of a tyrant is a popular blessing, but his assassination a horrible crime. Death is often a happy release, but death in the order of Nature. A mother may wish her child's death-agony ended, but should she strangle him she is guilty of infanticide, and the man who lays violent hands on himself is, as we have said, more guilty in the sight of God than the most atrocious murderer.

Brethren, besides the law of Nature, there is also the law of society. Aristotle taught that the citizens belonged to the state, so that self-destruction would be an infringement of state rights. Now, although no modern government holds such a claim, still every well-ordered community must demand a practical application of the precept, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Still more, as regards suicide, I firmly believe a man is bound to love his fellowman even better than himself. To procure one's own good, or apparent good, by means that is sure to shock and scandalize the community is, I take it, unworthy of a Christian and a man. St. Paul was the ideal citizen, and it is St. Paul who says, "If by eating meat I scan-

dalize my brother, I shall never eat meat in æternum." And here it is the suicide's selfishness shows itself. His life has become a burden, difficulties confront him, disgrace stares him in the face, he becomes sentimental and morose, he despairs, and ends it all in death. And men, mind you, are wonderfully imitative; suicide easily becomes epidemic, and will you tell me that he who leads that grim march to destruction has nothing to answer for for those who follow? But what cares he? What thought has he of the children left destitute, of the heartbroken wife, of the mother's gray hairs bowed in shame and sorrow, of the hundreds financially ruined by his folly, and the thousands of young souls scandalized by his mad act? Men say, "What courage he must have had to do it," but truth to say, he was an arrant coward. He shirked life's sacred duties; when the moment came for him to charge on the rank and file of this world's difficulties he turned and fled like a hireling. We may bend and we may bleed under life's crosses, but the silent, patient bearing of them calls out the noblest qualities of our natures and is the true test of heroism. The man who, with the eyes of his country on him, amid the frenzy of battle and to the sound of martial music, seeks glory at the cannon's mouth, would probably prove anything but a hero in the long-drawn-out endurance of this world's trials, with no hope of commendation or reward this side of the grave. Courage cannot be tested in a single act, least of all the act of a suicide.

Brethren, it remains to briefly point out the cause

of suicide and its remedy. Judas betrayed his Saviour, and went out and hanged himself. Loss of faith in the supernatural, loss of hope in the future, loss of charity for God and mankind, in a word, materialism is a fruitful source of this, as of every other crime. What is the remedy? Education of the mind? No; for it often happens the most highly cultured kill themselves. No, the remedy is education of the heart, Christian education. Hold up to a man the high ideals of the Christian faith, imbue him with its spirit of self-sacrifice, teach him the value of his soul, the transitory nature of this life, the existence of a hereafter of happiness or woe; in a word, teach him his duties to God, his neighbor and himself, and never, trust me, will his hand be raised against his own life. Amid the trials and afflictions of this world he will forget his own while alleviating those of others, and even in the worst possible crisis he will hearken to the voice of his Redeemer, "Come to Me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you and you shall find peace for your souls."

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

Hell.

"Gather up the cockle and bind it into bundles to burn."—Matt. xiii. 30.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Love and fear. II. Fear a worthy motive. III. Parable.
I. Existence: 1. Various opinions. 2. Proofs from Scripture. 3. From reason.
II. Nature: 1. Inconceivable. 2. Buried alive. 3. Lost soul.
III. Pains: 1. Of sense. 2. Of loss of God. 3. Eternity.
Per.: Self-examination as to mortal sin.

SERMON.

Brethren, hope and fear are the two great master-passions of every human soul. We become virtuous either through love of God or fear of hell. Hence it is that God and the Church appeal now to our love and again, and alas! oftener, to our fear, for so selfish are we that fear will drive us where love was powerless to lead. Nor is fear an altogether unworthy motive, sanctified as it has been by the Saviour Himself. "Fear not them," He says, "that kill the body, but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body unto hell." If in the Old Law the fear of the Lord was held to be the beginning of wisdom and had power to expel sin, how much more so in the New. Say what you will, but as long as the way to hell is so broad and pleasant, fear of God's threats will be an essential element of religion. "For," says St. Augustine, "fear precedes love as the

needle does the thread, so that love can neither enter nor come forth from the soul unless preceded by a salutary fear." Such being the case, let us reflect a while on that terrible sentence of the Gospel: "In the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: gather up the cockle and bind it into bundles to burn." According to Christ's own explanation God is the sower of the seed; His field, men's souls; His servants, the Church's ministers; His enemy, the devil; the cockle, sinners; and the harvest, the end of the world, when God's angels shall cast the wicked into hell to be burned forever.

Brethren, is there a hell? The world seems strangely divided on this subject. Some admit it, but they contend that hell will cease to exist after the General Judgment. Others say there is a hell, but they hold that out of hell there is redemption even for the devils. Others still go so far as to deny there is a hell at all. But our holy religion lays it down as an article of faith, and common sense, supplying a reason for the faith that is in us, asserts that there is a hell, an eternal hell. Holy Writ, the infallible word of God, in both Old and New Testaments, teems with allusions to the existence of hell. We find it spoken of first in respect to the rebel angels, where Christ says: "I saw Lucifer, like a thunderbolt, fall from heaven." And whither did he fall? We find the answer in the words God will address to the rebel souls on the judgment day: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." There is

scarcely one sermon of all those Our Lord preached during His ministry in which He does not warn sinners of the hell that awaits them. For example, speaking of scandal, He says: "If thy hand or thine eye scandalize thee, cut it off or pluck it out, for it is better to enter life blind and maimed than having two hands and two eyes to go down to hell." And this hell, He tells us, is eternal. He compares the world of souls to a great field of cockle and good wheat, to be separated in the great harvest time—the end of the world, but then separated forever—the wheat to be gathered into His barn and the cockle bound into bundles to be burned. His Church, He tells us, is a net cast in the night of time into the sea of this world, to be drawn forth by the angels in the morning of eternity, when they will separate, and separate forever, the good fishes from the bad—the virtuous souls from the wicked. The story of Dives and Lazarus which we have often read—could words assert more plainly a heaven for the blessed and a hell for the damned? So plain, indeed, is this truth, that all men admit it either explicitly or implicitly, for, if they deny a punishment after death, why do they not enjoy this life to the full? Why do they obey human laws or abide by a code of human morality? Why do they not plunder and outrage and murder? Why fear man? Why fear God? Ah, I deny hell with my lips to soothe my guilty conscience, but my life and heart and soul cry out there is a hell—an eternal hell. For I know that my God is a God of infinite

majesty and, hence, that an offence against Him is an infinite offence calling for an infinite punishment. And since I am a finite being, incapable of sustaining torments of infinite intensity and still bound to undergo an infinite punishment, therefore will my torments be infinite not in intensity but in duration. For my God is a just God, bound by His very nature to fit the punishment to the crime. He has promised explicitly to reward every man according to his works. Now, where is this promise fulfilled? On this earth? No, no, for I see around me a world of saints and sinners—the saints in poverty and misery all their lives, the sinners in affluence and happiness. In the next life? Therefore I say there must be a heaven of delights for the good and a hell of torments for the wicked! Or is it not fulfilled at all? Therefore my God is an unjust God and His promise of reward and punishment is a lie; and since a God who is unjust and untrue is no God at all, therefore, either hell exists or God is not. If I deny the existence of hell I must, to be consistent, deny the existence of God Himself. But I know that I have a God, just and true, and, therefore, reason and faith bid me receive His words as infallible when He says: "In the last day the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting."

Brethren, now that we feel sure there is a hell, let us try to realize what hell is. Let us go down in spirit to that gloomy cavern, that city of pain and woe, the abode of the damned; and let us pause a

moment, before entering, to read the dread inscription on the grimy portal: "Abandon hope, all ye that enter here." Let us pass on into the gloom beyond, and view the exquisite tortures prepared for man by an almighty and implacably just God; let us see the frightful aspect of the devils and the damned; let us hear the whirlwind of sighs and moans, the shrieks of pain, and the vile blasphemies against the Most High, and let us go on and explore hell from top to bottom and paint it to ourselves in the most horrible colors—and after all we shall not have realized even a shadow of the reality—for "eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God has prepared for those that hate Him." Suppose all the arch-tyrants and cruel savages that ever lived or will live, were to come together to devise new means of torturing one poor martyr, what an excruciating series of agonies they would invent! And yet, all that would be ease and comfort compared with the torments God has prepared for His enemies. For, alas, and alack! God is almighty and all-wise, not only in preparing good things for His faithful children, but also in preparing woes for His rebel subjects. O God forbid that we should ever experience the sensations of a man who goes to sleep in death with mortal sin upon his soul, and wakes up immediately in a miserable eternity—God forbid it, I say, but God grant we may feel enough of that anguish now, to drive us in fright to God. Let me, therefore, imagine myself to have been struck down in a

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moment and laid on my death-bed—dying. My heart ceases to beat, my breath stops, my eyes are fixed and glassy, and my whole body is rigid and cold. The doctor bends over me and says: "He is dead," and my sobbing friends cry: "Lord have mercy on his soul." But now suppose I am not dead at all but only in a trance, conscious of all going on around me but unable to move a muscle. I feel them prepare my body and lay me in state, and friends come and weep over me, and they talk of me and they pray for my soul and, my God! they never dream that I am still alive. And now the coffin comes and they lift me into it and they bid me a last farewell and oh, horror! the coffin lid closes above me and still I cannot move. They bring me to church and lay me before the high altar, and I hear, as though afar off, the pealing of the organ and the priest's voice faintly intoning: "Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine." Ah! now, we are in the cemetery and I hear the grating of the ropes as they lower me into the grave, and then comes the awful rattle as fast and furious they shovel in the earth. Oh, horror of horrors! In a frenzy of anguish, with one last supreme effort I cast off my lethargy, and commence to struggle with the blind fury of despair. Oh God! it is too late, I am lost; fainter and fainter grows the noise of the shovels, and soon all is silent and I am left alone in my living tomb. But still I struggle in my narrow cell. My hands and feet are bound fast, but I hammer my head against my coffin lid, and I plunge wildly, and turn round and round and bite and gnaw

with my teeth until my whole head is one mass of bleeding wounds; and ever and anon I raise my voice in an unearthly cry that serves only to curdle my own blood with its weird horror. At last, smothered and exhausted, I sink down in stolid despair to die. Buried alive—buried soul and body—buried when one little puncture of the skin would have saved me; lost perhaps through my pet vice, for which I sacrificed my life and my all; abandoned by the world and my dearest friends; crazed with hunger and thirst, tortured in every sense; mad with vain regret for what I have lost and lost forever. O God, the cup of my bitterness is filled, let me die. Ah, well might I say with my last breath: "Oh, all ye that pass by the way, come and see if there is, or ever was, woe like to my woe." But a damned soul may answer me from hell: "Alas! multiply your miseries ten thousand times and even then they will fall infinitely short of mine. Could I change places with you, your condition would be heaven for me after the horrors of my present abode. I am buried body and soul, not in the cool earth with a rich and padded casket around me, but in a sea of fire which penetrates my very vitals. I am not alone with only myself to wound and my own yells to terrify me, but I am in the midst of loathsome devils who cut and tear me limb from limb, and terrify me with howls, compared with which the yell of a maniac is a whisper. I have lost, not the world, but God. I cannot hope for death to come and relieve me, for I seek and pursue the demon of death but it flies from me and mockingly

shouts back 'eternity.'" Ah, no! the greatest torments of this life, how horrible soever they may seem, bear no kind of proportion to the tortures of hell. Christ our Lord described hell in these words: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," but only a God could express so much in so few words. In them He tells us there are three kinds of torments in hell; first, the pain of the senses; secondly, the pain of the loss of God—"Depart from Me," and thirdly, and worst of all, the fact that these pains are eternal—everlasting. "In what things soever a man shall have sinned, in these also shall he be punished." Hence, I will be tortured in every one of my five senses. These eyes, through which the devil so often gained admission to my soul—so eager for filthy and adulterous sights, so baneful, probably, to my neighbor's salvation—ah, what horrid things will these eyes then see! Were I to find myself alone in a cemetery at midnight and there to be confronted by a grim spectre—a living skeleton half hidden, only, in its snowy shroud—what would be my terror! Now, if the devil is so frightful in human shape, what must he be in his own native ugliness? If so unpleasant to look at here on earth, what will he be when I see him at home in hell? The lost souls, too, what a shocking sight they will present and that, too, in the dim light of hell, for the hell-fire gives not light enough to comfort the eye, but only enough to reveal to it everything that may torment it. Oh, if I am ever to go to hell, it is small comfort for me to reflect I will

not be there alone, for the presence of other lost souls will only serve to aggravate my misery. I will be forced to listen to their eternal moans and cries, and hear their hoarse voices shout blasphemies and curses against themselves, their companions, their parents; against their partners in sin, against the saints and angels and against God. Parents curse their children and children their parents, and one sinner upbraids another for causing his ruin. Such are the sounds I will have to hear, while I myself lend my voice to swell the chorus of universal woe which will proclaim God's justice as long as the choir of heaven proclaims His mercy. Weeping and gnashing of teeth and woe eternal. My sense of taste, too, shall be tortured. "They shall suffer hunger like dogs," says Holy Writ. Josephus relates that at the siege of Jerusalem, so great was the famine, that men drew lots and devoured one another and that even the mothers cooked and ate their own nurslings. That siege, Our Lord tells us, was a figure of the woe to come—the torments of hell. Gnawing hunger and a burning thirst, worse than the thirst of the famished Arab in the desert; worse than that of Christ on the cross—a thirst so consuming that the lost soul dares even to turn to God and cry out: "Father Abraham, have pity on me, send the humblest among the blessed that he may place one drop of water on my tongue to cool this raging thirst with which I am devoured." Aye and it will cry in vain, for there is no relief. Again, my sense of smell—alas! another agony; for hell is, as

it were, a vast cesspool into which all the impurities of the world, like the contents of so many teeming sewers, are poured. Since the bodies of the damned are in a state of never-ending decay, a fetid stench will arise from them as from the bodies of a mighty host slaughtered and abandoned on the field of battle. Packed in like sheep in a pen, unable to move a muscle to alleviate their pain, handcuffed to the decaying body of a fellow-sufferer and saturated through and through with a living flame that devours but does not consume, tortures but does not kill! Oh, let me look at a burning building, and ask myself if this fire, which God created for man's use and comfort, is so awful in its nature and so destructive in its effects, what must that fire be which God created expressly to be the instrument of man's punishment! The sufferings of St. John cast into a caldron of boiling oil; of St. Lawrence slowly roasted on a gridiron; of the blessed martyrs cast into fiery furnaces and vats of molten metal; of the early Christians covered with pitch and tar and set fire to by Nero to light the streets of Rome; the sufferings of all these were as nothing beside the burning of a soul in hell. Ah! well they knew it, for did they not suffer so in order to avoid the greater pains of hell? For the fire of hell is a spiritual living thing that feeds alike on soul and body. But this is the least part of the anguish of my soul—its worst pain is the pain of the loss of God—the one being in all the world for whom my soul craves. God who lifted me out of the dirt of my nothingness and adopted me as

His son, and promised me a throne in heaven if I would keep His commandments—bear a burden that was light and a yoke that was sweet. God who, when I disobeyed, came down from heaven and wiped out my sin with His precious heart's blood. God who, like a tender father, followed me to the gate of hell itself and all but forced me back—that God is now lost to me and I to Him. I have heard the sentence: "Depart from Me, ye cursed," and oh, was there ever exile so bitter and desolate? Exiled from my rightful home—heaven; from the one near and dear to me—God; into a wild and blazing desert—hell; to be tortured by the savage inhabitants, the devils. And all this through my own fault, when I might have gained heaven by one-half the labor and anxiety I expended to purchase hell—through my own fault, through my most grievous fault. O God, what a maddening thought that is! If I were innocent like Job—if some one else were solely responsible for my misfortune I would, like Job, be patient in the midst of my afflictions, but no, I am lost through my fault, through my most grievous fault. My fate is sealed and sealed forever. Forever, never; never, forever, are the words that resound continually through hell and add the last drop of bitterness to the misery of the damned. For in the thought of eternity consists the real sting of hell. Desire without hope, torture without respite or end. If the damned could only feel that their sufferings would cease even after millions and billions of years, hell from that moment would be no longer

hell for them, for the hope of redemption would console and sustain them through it all. But as it is, there is no such hope. "Forever, never," the demons cry, and the dismal echo answers back from the lowest pit: "Never, forever." Oh, eternity! I tremble at thy very name, but at the bare mention of an eternity of hell, I seem to myself to fairly shrivel up and wither away for very fear. Oh, eternity, how shall I ever even imagine thy unlimited immensity! As well might I sit down by the sea and attempt to take the ocean drop by drop and place it in the hollow of my hand, as to try to get the idea of eternity into the little compass of my shallow brain. For eternity spreads out before me as a limitless sea, over which, if I should travel forever, I would find in the end the same dreary waste before me. By what measure shall I compute the vastness of eternity? The sun is ninety millions of miles from me. Light travels twelve millions of miles a minute, and yet the light from the nearest fixed star takes three and a half years to reach me. There are actually stars in the firmament whose light, travelling twelve millions of miles a minute since the creation, has not reached the earth yet and will not until the end of time. And to all these millions and billions of years add every atom of which this earth is composed, every drop of water in the ocean, every particle of the air, every leaf of the forest, and every blade of the field, and let each atom and drop and particle and leaf and blade represent a million years, and taken all together do they equal eternity? Alas,

no; when they shall have passed, eternity shall have scarcely begun. The mind loses itself and stands astonished on the verge of that illimitable space, and the heart stands still in an ecstasy of terror when we reflect on the unspeakable despair this thought must bring to the lost soul. If God were for once to relent and allow Lazarus to place one drop of water every million years on Dives' tongue, the time would come when every lake, sea and ocean would be exhausted in that work of mercy, and still eternity had scarcely begun. Were Dives then every million years to miserably shed one tear over his loss, time would be when every lake, sea and ocean would be restored, and yet eternity and still an eternity beyond. Forever, never; never, forever.

Brethren, there is a hell, an eternal hell, a hell of inconceivable torments, prepared for the devil and his angels. How far away from, or how near to, the edge of that abyss stand we to-night? Heaven is never sure until you are safely there, but not so hell. Be assured that if to-night you find yourself in mortal sin; if you are doing the devil's work by sowing the devil's seed in your own or your neighbor's soul; if you are habitually inclined to disregard not only God's love but His fear as well,—be assured, I say, there is a place in hell for you, and the chances are you will one day occupy it. But no; oh, I beg you to turn to God while you may. Fear Him, the avenger; love Him for having spared you so often; persevere in His service for very gratitude, and let God do the rest. It will be of you He will

be speaking when "in the time of the harvest He will say to the reapers: Gather ye the wheat into My barn."

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

The Stability of the Christian Church.

"The kingdom of heaven is like to a mustard-seed . , , to a leaven hid in three measures of meal."—Matt. xiii. 31, 33.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Paul's confidence. II. Destruction and construction. III. No cause for alarm.
I. An imperial power: 1. Christ a king. 2. Delegated power. 3. Two parables.
II. Danger: 1. Conflict of rights. 2. Spirit of State. 3. Church's solution.
III. Church indispensable: 1. Liberty and peace. 2. Political integrity. 3. Patriotism.
Per.: 1. Church and State in America. 2. Calm progress. 3. Our duty.

SERMON.

Brethren, in these parables Christ guarantees the steady progress of the Christian Church. He would have us "feel confident of this very thing that He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus."

In these words, Paul the Apostle expresses his firm trust in God's power and Christ's promise to sustain, protect and advance His Church against all opposition all days, even to the consummation of the world. And we Catholics of to-day have sore need of Paul's spirit—of his faith and hope. When we

consider the present unhappy relations of Church and State the world over, and, more especially, the antagonism between the one true Church and the various Christian and anti-Christian sects, we are apt to become discouraged—to lose heart as did the little crew of Peter's bark on the storm-tossed sea of Galilee. Men are more observant of destruction than they are of constructive results—the thunder and lightning command attention, but Nature's greatest force—the sun—is barely considered. So, too, the Church. So uniform is her progress, her influence on the age—that it is scarcely noticed, whereas the opposing forces are the observed of all. When the storm of persecution rages, therefore, remember a storm clears the atmosphere; that it is only momentarily dangerous—for silent and peaceful forces alone are productive of lasting effects. No cause for fear for the Pilot and crew of Peter's bark, for they have on board not merely Cæsar but Cæsar's God. Nay, religious persecution should be our greatest joy, our liveliest hope, for resistance betokens progress—action is measured by reaction: and invariably antagonism arouses the antagonized to more strenuous efforts. In her inception, in her experiences of the past, in her attitude at the present day, we find no cause for alarm regarding the Church's ultimate destiny. She should not, cannot, be destroyed except, indeed, as another Samson burying herself and mankind in the ruins of the universe. No, when finally she stands on the borders of time and eternity looking back over the past she shall be able to say with

the Psalmist: "Often have they fought against me from my youth, but they could not prevail over me."

The stability of the Christian Church is emphasized in her very inception in that she was founded as an imperial power—a kingdom. Ignore it as the world may; no man who reads and believes the Bible can deny the Church's claim to royalty. Ages before Christianity the kingship of Christ had been foretold, so that even the heathens looked to Judea for their future sovereign, and Israel turned to little Bethlehem for its promised ruler. So minutely had the prophets, especially Isaias and Daniel, described the future king and estimated his kingly dignity, so deeply imbued had the Jews become with this important idea, that, on Christ's approach to Jerusalem, notwithstanding all their jealousy and hatred, we find them going forth in throngs to meet Him, with palms in their hands and crying: "Hosanna to our King, the Son of David." Christ Himself never failed to assert His own kingly authority and the imperial character of the Church He founded. "All power is given to Me," He says, "in heaven and on earth," and to His Apostles He added: "I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me." Besides giving Peter the keys of His kingdom, that is, the plenitude of His power, He identified Himself with the whole band saying: "He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me and Him that sent Me." Nay, he would have their power even greater than His own, for having previously said that whereas rebellion

against the Son will be forgiven, but rebellion against the Holy Ghost never—either in this world or in the next, He now says to His Apostles: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." And the dominion He gives them, He promises, shall embrace every creature in the whole world and shall endure for all time. Now this kingdom of Christ, forasmuch as it is on the earth, is not wholly spiritual—it is as visible and tangible as the kingdom of Britain or the German empire. When Christ said: "My kingdom is not from hence," He did not mean to disclaim an earthly empire, but He pointed, rather, to the divine origin of His authority. With this authority He invested a purely human society which, after His ascension, from small beginnings grew into a mighty empire, the ruler of rulers, the common mother and protector of kingdoms. Herein is verified that twofold description of Christ's kingdom in the Gospel: "First, it is like a man gone into a far country who called together his servants and delivered unto them his goods; and second, it is like the mustard-seed, the least of all, but being grown becomes a great tree in whose branches the fowls of the air find a shelter."

Granted then, the imperial nature of Christ's kingdom on earth—Christ's Church—we are confronted immediately with the one great menace to her stability—her contact with the purely secular powers of the world and the consequent clashing of rights. Having her divine destiny to attain, the Church can never forego one iota of her authority without proving false to her mission and her Founder. On

the other hand, the secular authority is, for the most part, in the hands of men full of inordinate ambition without the restraints of religion or conscience. She claims as Christ claimed: "All power in heaven and on earth," but they answer her as they answered Him: "We will not have you reign over us; we have no king but Cæsar." Hence a conflict disuniting the heads of Church and State and parting the ranks—down to the humblest devotee and the lowliest citizen. Hence, too, that question which is agitating every Christian people to-day: "Can I be, at the same time, a good citizen and a good Catholic?" The Church shifts the responsibility of this conflict by answering emphatically, "Yes." But how? "Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's." Two locomotives running together on parallel lines are not less liable to collide than are Church and State if this rule be applied. "All power from God," but each has its separate dominion—the Church over man's spiritual nature and the temporalities inseparably attached thereto, with eternal happiness as an object—the State over man's purely temporal nature and temporal well-being. The State is as Adam when God created him; the Church, as Adam when He had breathed into him the spirit of God. What man is to the material universe, the Church is to the nations—their high-priestess, ordering them all to God. As the soul without the body, the Church can exist without the nations, but not they without her; so that even should they achieve the impossible and

destroy her, their act would be self-destruction. Without her, there would be no freedom—"To be free," says Washington, "a nation must be virtuous," and the Church is the Mother of virtue. In France, for instance, the reign of terror began only when the Church was banished or suppressed. Without her there would be no harmony, for harmony is the result of self-sacrifice—a thing unknown outside the Church, especially among politicians. Without her there would be no national solidity. She is the keystone—the very heart of the nation at which the destroyer of truth would naturally aim as did Titus at the Jewish Temple. Without her there would be no political honesty. She teaches that public office is a public trust, conferred not by men but by God, to be exercised under the ever-wakeful and all-seeing eye of God and not under the public eye that winks and sleeps betimes. Without her there would be no patriotism. Religion and patriotism are inseparable. We cannot say with Ruth: "Thy people shall be my people" without adding with her: "and thy God my God." I love my country because I love the people in it, and it is God and the Church and not politicians that teach me to love my fellowmen, even my enemies. In fact the Catholic Church is a school of patriotism. It was patriotism that led to Christ's being born in a cave, to His being circumcised, to His paying tribute, to His weeping over Jerusalem, and the noblest patriot the world has ever seen was Christ dying on the cross. Never were truer patriots than the Apostles when they answered their persecutor:

"We must obey God rather than man," and died for it. Why, in the Epistles of St. Paul alone, may be gathered the grandest treatise on patriotism ever written. Each Christian martyr was a true patriot because he gave his life for the Christian faith which was, ultimately, to be the liberator of his country and all countries from the slavery of paganism. And who to-day are the true patriots? The infidel throng? No, no. "Give me," says a famous general, "give me the soldier who, when he kisses his country's flag throws around it the halo of his religion; who, in the vision of his beloved country, sees the font of his baptism, his home, his Church and the consecrated graves of his forefathers." In a word, since the public worship of God in Christ's own Church is the highest function of man or citizen, therefore the better the Catholic the better the citizen—the better the citizen the nearer to being a Catholic—but the "ideal Catholic" and he alone, can be the ideal citizen.

Brethren, there is opposition to our Church even in free America—some communities calling themselves Christian will oppose a Catholic more than an atheist or Nihilist. The State usurps many of her rights concerning education, marriage, and the like. So-called ministers of the Gospel, lurking cowardly behind the State, attack the State's truest friend as a foreigner and traitor. Pseudo-patriots concoct dark schemes for her destruction. Why, you ask, does not the Church bestir herself and assert her rights? Ask the huge lion, as he stalks along, why he does not

turn aside to chastise every tiny cur that barks at him. Ask Christ why He suffered Himself to be led like a lamb to the slaughter. The secret of this phenomenon is a sense of stability—a consciousness of power with perfect resignation to the workings of divine providence. The Church answers her enemies as did Christ His: "Thou shouldst have no power over Me were it not given thee from above." With Him she prays "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That is the spirit of Christ, of St. Paul, and of every true Catholic, too. As St. Peter says: "Let us so deport ourselves that by well doing we may silence the ignorance of foolish men," and withal let us have an abiding trust in the ultimate victory of justice and of truth. Let us convince ourselves from a consideration of the Church's divine origin, from her nature as an imperial power, from her absolute necessity to the existence of the State, and from the disreputable character of her opponents, that He who hath begun a good work in her will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.

Septuagesima Sunday.

THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD.

"*Man goeth forth unto his labor until the evening, and then cometh the night when no man worketh.*"—Psalm ciii. 23; John ix. 4.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Necessity of labor. II. Our choice. III. Our reward.
I. Parable: 1. Rich youth and Peter's query. 2. Five special calls. 3. The recusant.
II. Choice: 1. Two masters. 2. Vineyard and race-course. 3. Worldling and sluggard.
III. Reward: 1. Coin is heaven. 2. Justice to all. 3. First, last; last, first.
Per.: Newman's picture of ideal Christian.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, for six days the Creator wrought, and rested on the seventh; not till the darkened sun cast night on Calvary did the Redeemer desist from His labors; and the Holy Ghost, we are told, the Sanctifier and Saviour, will continue His beneficent mission even to the night of time—the consummation of the world. Ceaseless activity, then, being a characteristic of God, what wonder that toil is the common lot of man, for the Creator is the creatures' archetype. Man, even before his fall, was bidden dress and keep the earthly paradise, but after his sin his toil became for him a curse. The convict in his solitary cell anon realizes that work is a necessity of our being. "Labor," says Shakespeare, "physics pain; 'tis in itself a blessing and cursed only in its products, the

thorns of disease and weariness, and the thistles of disappointed hopes." Our call from nothingness into being was a call to labor, and after life, time comes when no man worketh—the night of death—the Sabbath of eternity. Work we must, but ah, for whom, for whom? What species of labor shall our life's work be? For a life-day well spent, what shall be the eventide reward? What is our standing among the laborers here? What shall be our place among the elect hereafter? Brethren, these are the questions answered in the parable of to-day—the call of the laborers—their work in the vineyard and the paying of the laborers their wages.

Brethren, Christ's object in this parable was to teach the special blessedness of one that from the world is called to labor in God's service, and that too at the eleventh hour or under the Christian dispensation. A rich young man had come and cast himself before the Saviour and begged to know what he must do to gain eternal life. "Give up all," the Saviour said: "and come and follow Me." Then seeing the young man sadly turn away, He added: "How hard is entrance into heaven for the rich!" Closely watching every move was Peter and the other Apostles. Then Peter spoke: "Master, we have left all to follow Thee; what shall be our reward?" And Christ made answer: "Amen, I say to you, in the last great judgment day you shall sit in judgment on the twelve tribes of Israel. And not you alone, but every one who abandons all for love of Me, shall be recompensed an hundred-fold in life everlasting, and

many that are first shall be last and the last shall be first." Peter and the others, being men well on in years, were fearful, doubtless, of having entered their Master's service all too late; of having too long idly loitered in the market-place. Besides, they had heard from Christ that the Christian era is the world's eleventh hour—its final stage—and so they deemed the time too short to achieve so great a work and gain such great reward. Far different is the teaching of Christ's parable. God is Father of the universe; the world of rational creatures, the members of His household; and His vineyard was the Jewish synagogue and is now the Christian Church. His family comprises three divisions: His children, the angels and blessed in heaven; living men, His freedmen; and the lost souls, His slaves. From His freedmen alone He recruits the laborers in His vineyard. On five distinct occasions has He deigned with more than ordinary condescension to visit this busy mart—this worldly world of ours, and each time has He called fresh laborers to His vineyard. From time's beginning to time's end is but a day to God—as short to Him as seems to us the insect's life that is born at sunrise and at sunset dies. God's first coming was in time's first hour, and the first to labor in His vineyard were the common parents of us all. His subsequent goings forth in search of laborers mark the great physical and moral regenerations of the world, viz.: the time of Noe which was the third hour; the day of Abraham which was the sixth; the day of Moses which was the ninth; the coming of Christ which

was the eleventh hour in the flight of time. Thankful ought we be that the Lord of the vineyard never sought in vain—that in every age there were some, at least, who hearkened to His voice and turned to His service. True, many in every age did not respond, but the noise of the market-place is deafening; the calls of worldly cares are numerous and loud, and drown the voice of God. Are such men lost? No; God forbid! Ask such a one: "Why stand you here all the day idle?" and he will reply: "Because no man hath hired me." Because, that is, he had not heard God's call, or though it echoed in his ears, it failed to reach his mind and heart. There are here to-day eyes that weep and hearts that ache for loved ones that do not, will not, hear; but be not disheartened. A change will come. Proud Wolsey in adversity turns penitently to God, and many a worldly soul is led at last to say as penitently: "Would that I had served my God with half the zeal wherewith I served the world." When affliction draws us from out the din and uproar of the world, and when, like wounded animals, we hide ourselves away and feel around us the awful stillness of approaching death, the voice of God sounds plainer, the works of years are crowded into a few moments of intense, agonized repentance, and whereas we were last, we become first, and whereas we were not even deemed among the called, we are now among the very chosen.

Brethren, labor is a necessary condition of life, but it is ours to choose which shall be our master, God or the world. By the service of the world I mean any-

thing and everything that leads us from the service of God according to Christ's saying: "He that is not with Me is against Me." True, the legitimate management of worldly affairs is not incompatible with the service of God, provided the laborer be so disposed that whatever he do, he does for God. A soul adorned with God's grace, and united to Christ's Church by faith and hope and love, and doing all from the higher motive of pleasing God, is really in its commonest actions working in the vineyard of the Lord. Such a laborer glorifies his work, changing a curse into a blessing even as Christ sanctified our tribulations by bearing the thorns of earth upon His sacred brow. All other labors are but wasted energy and outside the vineyard, and will count for nothing on the great pay day. St. Paul employs the figure of a race-course and urges us all to run so as to obtain the prize. The first condition of success is to be entered for the race—to fight the battle on the course, and not where you will, in some neighboring field. God is the generous Giver of the prize, and His it is to settle when and where and how the work be done, the race be run. Nor does it for the prize suffice to work and run; we must work and run right well, for adverbs and not verbs are crowned. The rich young man ran eagerly to Jesus' feet, but missed the prize he sought, for he ran not well, encumbered with his riches as he was. He essayed the impossible, viz., to serve two masters. He fain would work at once outside and in the vineyard, or at the same time run a race on two far different tracks. Oh how many

Ananiases and Saphiras there are among us, who pretend to bring their all and lay it at the feet of Christ, and stealthily keep a portion back! How many fain would grasp the prize, and shirk the toil whereby alone it can be won! How many in a kind of grim despair turn from God's vineyard, give up the race for heaven, and consecrate themselves and all their being to the service of the world! And yet they work and run as hard and even harder, but not with God nor for Him; not in His vineyard or according to the rules of His race-course. Of them He says: "I sent them not and yet they ran," and at the judgment when they seek reward, He will answer them: "Amen, I know you not." Love's labor lost! for that they loved was false—corruptible. For years they braved the wear and tear, the din and tumult of the world's market-place, and like brokers in stocks that change, find in the end no gain, or only gain that counts for loss, as leading more from God. The devil used the things of earth to catch them, as the fishermen use bait, luring them on with hollow imitations of real happiness, robbing them of their spoil by death as soon as caught, and making the self-same riches and honors and pleasure serve for ages as means to win innumerable souls. From such vain toil God calls mankind to labor in His vineyard. "Come," He says, "all ye that labor and are burdened with the world's heavy yoke, and I will refresh you. Take upon you My yoke, which is sweet, and My burden, which is light, and learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart and you shall obtain here earth's choicest

blessing—a peaceful soul—and hereafter the happiness of heaven." For God, too, is a fisher of men and such the bait He uses, and incredible though it seems, men snatch more eagerly the painted imitation than the rich reality. Why think you is it God so often and so heavily afflicts us? Why do riders whip and spur their favorite racers? God wishes us to win, and all His scourgings are but proofs of love, while the devil's siren blandishments but prove his hate. But scourge us as He may, God finds many of us as hard to guide and slow to travel toward the heavenly Jerusalem as was that lowly beast Christ rode into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. It is a fact worthy of mention, and of notice, that though the ancient law prescribed that the first-born of every flock and herd should be sacrificed to God, a sheep was always substituted for the ass, as though to show God's aversion for that animal and all who inherit its propensities. If such like be God's attitude towards the sluggard, what must His loathing be for one whose movements in the way of right suggest the slowness of the snail; who carries, like the snail, his treasury of riches on his back, and who spends his greatest energy in clinging to things of earth! "Go to," says the Proverb, "and learn wisdom from the ant." Untiring industry, a determination to overcome all obstacles, and perseverance to the death, these are the qualities by which the race is won; this is the rule of labor in the Lord's vineyard—in this way the last become first and the first last—the called receive commendation and the chosen their reward.

Brethren, at the close of day the laborers gather round their Lord receiving every man his pay. "Call the laborers," He says, "and pay them their hire." Suppose He ordered the talkers to be called, what a vast crowd would come! But no! for not every man that says "Lord, Lord," shall be saved, but he that doth the will of the Father—he whose life is an honest day's labor in the vineyard of the Lord, he shall be saved. Not that even then the Lord is bound to reward us, but in His bounteous goodness He elects to pay us for doing what He has the right and power to command. Is it not lawful for Him to do as He will? If, notwithstanding the different hours of toil, it please Him to give all equal pay, beginning from the last even to the first, does He do wrong? No, for the coin He gives in payment is heaven, the possession and vision of Christ forevermore. The figure on a coin, the inscription, its shape and power, all signify the attributes of Christ, who is the figure of the King, His Father's substance, the Word of God; whose eternity the endless circle of a coin denotes, and whose omnipotence it partly imitates. Labor as we will, and as long and hard—this priceless coin is ample recompense, and being satisfied, why should we murmur seeing others equally rewarded, though having labored less? Besides, though heaven's duration be the same for all, the intensity of happiness has different degrees. Each soul beatified will see God's face according to its capacity for seeing. Those animals, they say, that work in mines and never see the light become blind totally, and the owl, you know,

that shuns the light can never gaze upon the midday sun. So, too, it is with men, for in proportion as they shun the light of heavenly grace, and delve and bury their minds and hearts in earthly things, they lessen their capacity for enjoying the beatific vision, or forever forego all possibility of seeing God. But the Christian who in every action of his life looks up to God, who soars in spirit often beyond the range of earthly things—he is like the eagle, and in heaven at last he will gaze with eagle eye upon the glorified Sun. Our conduct here determines our degree of happiness hereafter, but all will be content, for why should a spiritual dwarf complain if his garb of glory be not as long as that of a spiritual giant? But is it fair, you ask, that he who labored but an hour should be paid off before the men who labored all the day? Brethren, God judges not the quantity but the quality of the work. The laborers of the eleventh hour are Christians, God's favorite workmen, so trained by Christ's precept and example, and so fortified by grace, that in an hour they do more work than the men of old in a day. The two spies sent by Moses to view the promised land returned bearing between them on a pole an enormous cluster of grapes. That vine denotes Christ on the cross, and he that went before, the Jews; and the Christian, he that followed. Christ shields us from the sun, His example is ever before us, He is ever at hand to refresh us; advantages that, prior to His coming, man did not enjoy. Thus the first became last and the last first. The same happens among Christians—Dives in all his riches and

Lazarus dying of hunger—both die and Lazarus is taken to Abraham's bosom and Dives is buried in hell. The falcon sits on the wrist of royalty and eats from precious vessels where the humble chicken dare not enter—death comes, and the falcon's carcass is flung in the sewer, but the chicken is served upon a dish of gold. The last becomes first and the first last.

Brethren, what must we do to be of the first—of the chosen? We have, thank God, among us many ideal Christians,—let us imitate them. "You will know them by their calm faces and sweet plaintive voices, and spare frames and gentle manners, hearts weaned from the world and wills subdued, whose meekness meets with insult and their purity with slander, their gravity with suspicion and their courage with cruelty; yet who meet with Christ everywhere; who keep their eyes forever on Him here as they hope to also forever hereafter."

Sexagesima Sunday.

THE NUMBER OF THE ELECT.

"And some fell upon good ground and sprung up and yielded fruit a hundred-fold. Now the good ground are they who, in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience."—Luke viii. 8, 15.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Farm. II. Will it pay? III. Number of elect.
I. Mystery: 1. Theologians and Index. 2. Christ's reply. 3. Many called, few chosen.
II. Study of men: 1. Unbelievers and believers. 2. Heretics and Catholics. 3. Good, bad.
III. Study of Saviour: 1. Why He came. 2. Attitude towards sinners. 3. Crescendo of love.
Per.: 1. Courage. 2. Love for God. 3. Charity for men.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, the old-fashioned New England farm is a fairly good picture in miniature of God's spiritual estate in the hearts of men. There are long stretches of highway, hills rocky and barren, patches of unreclaimed brushwood, and, finally, some acres of arable land. And, as with the farm, the all-important question is: "will it pay?" so with God's earthly estate the question of greatest moment is: "which is greater in area, the productive soil or the barren?" In the autumn, the harvest of time, what will be the relative proportion of the wheat and the chaff? In other words, on the great judgment-day, which will be numerically greater—the blessed company of the elect or the woeful throng of the reprobate?

Brethren, this is a mystery to which Christ's words may be appropriately applied—that it is known to no man, no, not even to the angels in heaven, but to the Father alone. That is why the Church, in one of her prayers, says: "O God, to whom only is known the number of the faithful to be admitted to the happiness of heaven." That, too, is why the Church, as such, has never committed herself to a dogmatic statement on the subject, but leaves the question still open to conjecture and argument. True it is, the weight of private opinion among theologians inclines to the doctrine that only a small minority will be saved; but that, at best, is private opinion; and it is worthy of remark that the greatest living theologian, though he teaches this doctrine in his written works, has more than once retracted it from the pulpit and in the class-room. It is true, also, that on May 22, 1772, the doctrine of "Salvation for the majority" was put on the Index, but we must not forget that decisions of a Congregation deciding individual disputes are by no means infallible. In the thirteenth chapter of St. Luke, a certain man questions Christ: "Lord, are they few that are saved?" Christ answered him: "Strive to enter by the narrow gate, for many shall seek to enter and shall not be able." Again, in the seventh chapter of St. Matthew, Christ says: "Wide the door and broad the way that leads to perdition, and many there are that travel by it; how small the gate and narrow the path that leads to life, and few there are that find it." He avoids a direct answer. To spur men on to

greater efforts, He compares the steep, thorny path to heaven with the primrose path to perdition, but He refuses to say which way the majority goes. When He says few find the small door and narrow path, He refers to Himself and His contemporaries—to Himself, the way to the truth and the life whom so few of them recognized and acknowledged as such. When He adds that many travel by the wide road to perdition, He simply expresses the infinite yearning of the Sacred Heart for man, to which one lost is many lost; to which many saved are few saved—which wishes all to come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved. So far, therefore, neither side of the dispute has anything like a definite argument to adduce either from Christ or the Church. In the parable of the virgins five are foolish and five wise. In the twentieth and twenty-second chapters of St. Matthew, however, we read: "Many are called, but few are chosen," words that, to some, prove that few indeed are saved, but words that, to my mind, prove that many more are saved than are lost. If you remember, they are the closing words of two famous parables—the parable of the householder who hired laborers for his vineyard, and the parable of the king who, to procure guests for his son's wedding-feast, turned from the discourteous rich to the riffraff of the highways and byways. Now, in the former parable there is no mention whatever of those that are lost, for we read that all the laborers, after their day's work, received, every man, a penny. The lost would, naturally, be those who,

hearing their Lord's call: "Go ye, also, into My vineyard" refused to comply; and some such there doubtless were, but an insignificant number—nothing to speak of. The sense, therefore, is that God invites all to labor in His service; some refuse and are lost; the multitude accept and are saved; many of these are called to the state of highest sanctity, which, however, is attained only by the chosen few. This interpretation is borne out by the latter parable which follows and explains the former. The wedding-feast signifies heaven; the guests, the elect. Now comparatively few refused the invitation; but the number of those who accepted was so great that we are told "the wedding was filled with guests." Now in all that multitude the king found just one—only one guest who had not on a wedding garment—one man unworthy of heaven whom he ordered to be cast into exterior darkness.

Brethren, it must be confessed that the human race, past, present and to come, is well typified in the parable of the cockle and good wheat, but I believe that the wheat, to flourish at all, must ever be in the ascendency. If we divide the human race into unbelievers and believers, we are, at first sight, appalled by the infidel throng, the Mohammedans and idolaters of the East and the Indians of the Western world. But yet we are assured by Christ Himself that "Many shall come from the East and the West and shall sit down in the kingdom of heaven." When the idolater and fetish worshipper lives virtuously, and dies in the belief and practice of

the only religion he has ever been taught, who shall deny him a share of that infinite mercy that has indirectly promised that of him little is expected to whom little is given? And the poor Indian—"whose untutored mind sees God in clouds, and hears Him in the wind," and aspires to a place in the happy hunting-grounds—surely the God of mercy never rejects such a simple, humble aspirant. Nay, even for the civilized fools that say in their heart "There is no God" there is yet hope of mercy, for if human justice exonerates the fool as irresponsible, may we not trust that divine Justice will be not less lenient? As for believers in the true God, though we admit, alas! that many of the children of the kingdom shall be cast out, still we confidently hold that the majority will be saved. Sadly divided, as Christians are, between the true Church and the various sects, it is still true to say that there is probably no sect so much in error that it does not, or did not, contain real saints within its fold. Remember always that before the throne of grace many a doctrinal error is overlooked in consideration of an honest, though mistaken, mind and a loving heart. As the prophet Samuel says: "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart." Finally, as to Catholics, there is no question but that they who live a Catholic life and die a Catholic death are saved. The number, too, of living saints around and among us is doubtless far greater than we suspect. They are like trees laden with fruit—they

bend ever lower and lower in their humility and pass unnoticed. But the appalling amount of misery and sin around and among us is well calculated to turn us again to Christ to ask "Lord, are they few that are saved?" For an answer, we must study the sinner and study the Saviour. The living sinner, be he ever so bad, never irrevocably forfeits his heirship to the kingdom of heaven. God's providence is with him even in his sins. Christ deals with him as with a ship at sea, lading him with a burden of temptations not excessive nor yet dangerously light; and very often God permits him to fall to the lowest depths that, as David says: "in very terror at the multitude of his own iniquities he may return more quickly and more closely to himself." God is a homœopath. Hence, Shakespeare says: "Best men are moulded out of faults; and, for the most, become much more the better for being a little bad." And St. Paul assures us that: "Virtue is perfected in infirmity." Hence, I say, from the amount of sin in the world we cannot fairly estimate the number of souls that are lost, for we must never lose sight of the fact that these very sinners were the primary object of Christ's coming on earth; that He has an infinite desire that all should be converted and live; that He is powerful enough to raise His murderous persecutor, Saul, to such a point of sanctity as not to be one whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles. Yea, even should the sinner persevere in his iniquity till the last few moments of his life, there are still, as for the thief on the cross, possibilities of

eminent sanctity open to him. For three years the fig-tree, in the parable, bore no fruit, but the fourth year it bore, being watered and pruned. Very often, too, when God applies to the sinner the pruning-knife of persecution—when the tears flow under affliction, disease, and approaching death, the blessed change is accomplished that gives joy to heaven—a great sinner becomes a great saint. And even before this change occurs, the poor sinner is not wholly bad. Many, if not most, of his faults are results of habit, done thoughtlessly, and not near so guilty as they seem. 'Neath an ugly hill often lies a gold mine; fathoms deep lie priceless pearls, and I tell you, friends, deep down in the worst of characters, there lie mines of goodness and brilliant virtues, that are never discovered except by the plummet of intimate acquaintance, or in some tremendous upheaval or crisis. Who would look to find saints among a rough ship's crew, and yet, not long since, we were told of a band of them shipwrecked and cast away, dying one by one rather than touch the little store of provisions they had turned over to the only child among them. There is nothing particularly saintly about a poor hod-carrier, yet, quite lately, when two of them, a married man and a single, were hanging by a thread, almost, on a high building in Paris, the single man let go and was killed rather than that the other's wife should be a widow and his children orphans. Nor need we go so far for examples of this kind. If you care to mingle among the poor you will find them, the most sinful

of them, every day unconsciously doing acts of goodness that will touch you to the heart. Therefore, I say, the sinner is not as bad as he appears. Let the occasion arise, give him but the chance, and he will show you the highest proof of love by giving his life for his brother. Therefore also, I say, it is probable that the majority, even of sinners, are saved, for "Charity," saith the Lord, "covereth a multitude of sins."

If this becomes probable from a study of the sinner, it becomes almost certain from a study of the Saviour. "I come," He says, "not to save the just, but sinners. I come that they may have life and have it more abundantly. I desire not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live." Will Christ's mission be a failure? Will the ruling passion of the Sacred Heart be thwarted? Will Christ's mystical body, which they are, be mostly lost? No; every phase of the sweet Saviour's character answers, No! "His burden is light, and His yoke is sweet"—a loving, a forgiving father—not an exacting tyrant. "For one cup of water," He says, "given in My name, I will give you eternal life." Oh, how gentle and loving He was when dealing with sinners! How He ate and drank and mingled with all that He might save all! You remember when He was refused admission to the Samaritan town, and James and John would have called down fire from heaven to consume it, how gently Christ rebukes them. "You know not," He says, "of what spirit you are, for the Son of man came not to destroy souls but to

save." His favorite place was among sinners. If He ascended the mount for a moment to teach His Apostles, He was back directly by the poor leper's side, touching him and curing him. Consider His love for Magdalen; see how lovingly He bids for the soul of the Samaritan woman at the well; behold Him in that most touching scene of all, when He boldly steps between the adulterous woman and her would-be murderers—and tell me, if you dare, that Christ's great love for sinners will be disappointed—that He will suffer the majority of them to be lost. Hear Him tell you that He yearns after the sinner as did his father after the prodigal; goes after him as the shepherd after the lost sheep in the desert; searches after him as perseveringly as did the woman for the lost groat—hear all this and be assured that only a minority, even of the sinful, are lost—that a majority of mankind is saved.

Brethren, in the ups and downs of life we sometimes get discouraged. Let me say to you to-day in the words of Christ: "Why fear ye, O ye of little faith?" Again, many of us serve God through fear rather than love. Look on Him, I pray you, not as a Master but a Father, and the thought of His superabundant goodness to all will inspire you to do your day's work for Him more cheerfully and better. Finally, many of us are inclined to look askance at, and shun, our wayward brethren. Do not so, but mingle with them as Christ did, becoming all things to all that you may save all. In your own interior life and in your dealing with your fellow men, do all

you can, that you and they may be of the number of those who "in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it and bring forth fruit in patience."

Quinquagesima Sunday.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

"*Behold, we go up to Jerusalem and the Son of man shall be scourged and put to death, but the third day He shall rise again.*"—Luke xviii. 31–33.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Text.
- I. Tribulations: 1. Israelites. 2. Our guilt greater. 3. Our worldliness.
- II. Drunkenness: 1. History and guilt. 2. Sea-donkey. 3. Devil ever active.
- III. Salvation: 1. One small door. 2. Circe. 3. The blacksmith.

Per.: 1. The cross. 2. Door of jubilee. 3. Foolish virgins.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, now is the season when we, too, start for the heavenly Jerusalem, through the penitential Lenten exercises and the arduous duties of a mission, and it is God's design that our human nature should be scourged and disciplined,—that it should die to the world, but that after these days it should rise again to a new life of grace. Our nature craves for laborless reward—a thornless rose—but do what we will, the cross comes first, and afterwards, perhaps, the crown. On that day when our first parents, wailing like lost souls, fled from their earthly paradise,

tribulation became the common heritage of man. "Cursed be the earth," said the Lord, "thorns and thistles shall it bear you." To punish is God's; 'tis ours to suffer, and happily merit by suffering patiently. When Moses led the chosen people through the Red Sea, they hoped to enter, immediately, the promised land, but finding a vast desert lay between, some were for returning into Egypt and sought to turn the people from their leader. But Moses sent ambassadors to view the land of promise, who returned with messages of comfort and despair,—of comfort because it was a land flowing with milk and honey, and of despair because they found it strongly fortified, with one small entrance guarded by giant warriors. Ah, Brethren, how many, when, through the waters of Baptism or sacramental penance they have fled from the tyranny of sin, are tempted to return because before them lies the seemingly cheerless waste of a virtuous life—because the fierce enemies of their souls so guard the one small door of paradise! They easily forget Paul's words: "that all who piously wish for life in Christ must suffer persecution," and that: "it is only through many tribulations one can enter into the kingdom of God." Not one of those faint-hearted Israelites was spared to see the promised land—and yet our inconstancy is guiltier than theirs. Not ten, but tens of thousands have glowingly described our heavenly inheritance. "O Lord of hosts," exclaims the Psalmist, "how lovely are Thy tabernacles." "Without Thee, O Lord," says Isaias, "nor eye can see nor heart conceive what things Thou

hast prepared for those that seek Thee." St. Paul assures us that the sufferings of this time bear no proportion to the glory to come. St. John, in his Apocalypse, describes the heavenly Jerusalem, and Christ Himself by word and deed foretold its beauties and its difficult attainment. 'Tis not without significance that, from the Jordan, Jesus turned Him to the desert, thus teaching us that we, as He, must suffer first and so enter into our glory. The disciple is not above his Master, and Christ has said and proved that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and by the violent only is attained. I repeat it, Brethren, with such proofs before our eyes—such object-lessons—to turn from our leader makes us guiltier than the faltering Israelites, and against us they will hereafter rise in judgment. If their disloyalty in thought and word deprived them of the sight of Palestine, how hope for heaven, we, disloyal as we are in fact—in deed? How hope for heaven, we, enjoying, as we do, the wondrous advantages of Christianity, and yet more faithless than the oppressed Israelite? Of the ambassadors sent by Moses, two returned bearing between them, on a pole, a huge cluster of grapes. Brethren, that vine-branch is Christ crucified; and he that went before, the Jews of old; and he that followed, the Christian people. We have the Saviour ever at our hand. We labor and are burdened, but He is ever there to refresh us with His graces, and our burden is lightened and our yoke sweetened by the thought that, if such is Christ crucified, what must He be in glory. We should love Christ's yoke and burden, so

that, not content with bearing what men have borne of old, we should, by voluntary chastisement, increase at once our labor and reward. Whereas, alas! we rather imitate the sons of Ruben and of Gad, who were content, we are told, with lands to the East of the Jordan, and shirked the work of conquering Palestine. A generous share of this world's gifts is all we worldlings ask: paradise we leave to monks and nuns. If Christ invite us to Jerusalem to a feast or ball, we accompany Him with a will, but when He speaks of being scourged and crucified, we follow Him no longer—like the Apostles, we no longer understand the things He says. Like the rich young man in the Gospel, we would all love to be Apostles, but when we learn that it involves the giving up of all to follow Christ's blood-stained footprints, we sadly turn away. He cries to us: "Blessed are the poor and meek; blessed are they that mourn and suffer persecution for justice' sake," but we cannot, we will not understand the things that are said. There is not a single one of us, perhaps, that does not love the Lord, but we love Him at what we are pleased to call His best, we love Him as He calms the winds and the seas, or stands transfigured on Mount Thabor, or feasting with the publicans and sinners; we love Christ everywhere except Christ crucified. Like the Jews on Calvary, we stand before the Saviour and cry to Him: "Come down from the cross, only come down from the cross, and we will believe in you." Ah! it is so hard to see things as God sees them—to realize the woes in store for them

who have their consolation here. Lazarus may be in Abraham's bosom and Dives buried in hell, but the rich man here is our ideal and the beggar is the beggar still. Why, so imbued are we with worldliness that if, perchance, some poor blind sinner turns to God and cries: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me," a dozen straightway rebuke him and bid him hold his peace. Those disloyal Israelites sought eagerly to spread disloyalty, and everywhere are found bad Christians, careless Catholics, who would in wisdom fain precede the Lord and still the voice of penitence. O Saviour! during this Lent and Mission, do so afflict those sinful men, so blind them to the world, that with softened hearts and straining ears they may listen for Thy passing footsteps and cry out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me; Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Brethren, there is one sin, especially, at which the Lenten mission aims—the worship of the false god, Bacchus. Some say it is a modern vice, but no, it dates back to the Deluge. Bacchus was worshipped in the Egypt of the Ptolemies, and in ancient Greece and Rome—nations, mind you, now extinct or fallen under Turkish sway. The Roman Senate once forbade this worship—an eloquent contrast to Christian governments that foster it and license it. It is safe to say, in fact, that Bacchus gets more votaries from Christians than from Pagans. They point to us with scorn. Every Christian drunkard delivers to the Gentiles once again the Son of man to be mocked and scourged and spit upon. Ah! when we think how

often and how many celebrate the feast of Bacchus—a double feast of the first class, with a vigil and an octave—have we not good cause to fear the history of Jerusalem's destruction will repeat itself? The drunkard is guiltier than the Saviour's crucifiers, for they were irresponsible fanatics, but he deliberately blinds his reason face to face with sin—"a double crime," says Aristotle, "deserving double punishment," a crime once under ban of excommunication in the Church. Drunkenness is such folly that, unlike most sins, its very motive is irrational. Every sense will crave its proper object, but that object in excess destroys the sense. The eye craves light, but not the direct rays of the sun; the ear craves sound, but not the shock of an explosion; and an overindulged taste forfeits its power of enjoyment. I will not deny, a little wine may please and benefit betimes, but only as St. Paul prescribes: "a little and that, too, only when necessary for the stomach's sake and one's manifold infirmities." There is danger always, lest, from small libations, one become a too fervent worshipper of Bacchus. "Their God," says St. Paul, "is their belly." A certain fish discovered by Aristotle has its heart in its stomach, and is called the sea-donkey. The drunkard shares the characteristics of that lowly animal; his heart is where his treasure is: he is lazy, stupid, lustful, and open only to one argument—a club. He lacks the higher qualities of the brute—a healthy appetite for water and the power of judging when he has enough. Talk to him of God and his soul—of the Mission or of Lent, and notwith-

standing Nature has given him generous ears, he cannot hear, he cannot understand. But talk to him of banquet halls and liberal potations, and lo, with ears erect, he is eager to begin. The Holy Ghost and Christ, the Doctors of his soul, denounce the drug as deadly, and though the bottle bear the death's-head label, he will drink it, come what may. Our life is warfare, and, says St. Paul, "whoever striveth for the mastery, refraineth him from all such noxious things, that weaken us or stupefy." Our adversary, the devil, knows no rest and it behooves us, lest we be surprised, to be sober and to watch. Drunkenness led to Noe's shame and his curses on his family; drunkenness caused Lot's crime and Samson's downfall; it led the Israelites to adore the golden calf, and through it Holofernes lost his head. "Drunkenness," says St. Basil, "is the ruiner of reason, the waster of our body's strength, it is premature old age and in a little while it is death."

Brethren, there is but one small door to heaven and many seek to enter and are not able. They are larger than the door, puffed up with pride and worldliness, for that small door is Jesus crucified. "I am the door," He says, "and whoso enters by Me shall be saved." History tells of men who sought to open other doors — Mohammed did, and Luther, and modern sinners do, but ah! they lead elsewhere—to hell. There is one small door, too narrow for the rich and corpulent, but wide enough for those who have become as little ones and mortify themselves for love of Christ. Old Homer tells of the enchantress

Circe who, by her magic, turned men into beasts, but certain herbs, whose flowers are whitest but whose roots the bitterest, rendered Ulysses proof against her charms. Brethren, such another herb is voluntary penance, bitter to the taste but bearing rarest flowers and fruits and fortifying us against Bacchante's incantations, who fain would make us beasts. In fact, the word tribulation comes from tribular, a thistle, because it pricks our feet and makes us careful how and where we walk. But that is only one of all its heavenly effects, bitter though it be. It is the gall wherewith the young Tobias smeared his father's eyes, for it enables our blinded eyes to shed the scales of sin and see aright. It is the absinthe on the breast of Nature that weans us from this world and concentrates our hearts on God. I remember, when a boy, I wondered why the village blacksmith doused the fire with water to heat the metal quickly. In Scripture figures, oil is comfort, and tribulation, water; and God afflicts us to prevent the heat of our affections going out to worldly things; to drive it inward and so inflame us with His love.

Brethren, there is to heaven but one small door, so low, indeed, that whoso enters in must bend low down until his body takes almost the form of a cross. Small chance is there for bloated, tipsy revellers to scramble through. Many, too, that seek to enter are not able, since they come too late and find it closed. In great St. Peter's, Rome, there is a little door where one may pass in time of jubilee, but after that not even prince or pontiff is suffered more to enter.

Brethren, this Lent, this Mission, is our time of jubilee. Let us beware lest we neglect our final opportunity. Let us beware lest on some future day we stand before the door of jubilee and knocking find it closed, and saying, "Open, O Lord, to us," we hear Him answering, "Amen, I know you not." Let us rather so prepare that knocking He may open to us and say: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

First Sunday of Lent.

Angel Guardians.

"*And behold: angels came and ministered to Him.*"—Matt. iv. 11.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Ingersoll's argument. II. His audience. III. Angels and devils.
I. Satan quoting Scripture: 1. Misapplies. 2. Misinterprets. 3. Mutilates.
II. Angels: 1. Hierarchy of guardians. 2. Attendant devils. 3. Life's perils.
III. Guardians: 1. Rouse sinner and prevent relapse. 2. Insure perseverance and defeat devils. 3. Save from spiritual and material dangers and God's wrath.
Per.: A beautiful, consoling, salutary doctrine.

SERMON.

Brethren, last Sunday an eloquent blasphemer tried to refute a Catholic, a Christian dogma—the existence of the fallen angels. His argument, to be

complete, should have included a denial of his own existence, for, verily, a perverse genius that can so hate God and scoff so at religion lacks little of the malice of a Lucifer. It would seem to have been a stroke of Providence that on that very Sunday from every Catholic pulpit should have been read the gospel of Our Lord's temptation by a demon, living and actually present. You know what arguments that tempter used—appeals to sensuousness, to presumption and to pride, and truly Satan's disciple is not above his master, for he used the selfsame weapons but more clumsily. It is an eloquent commentary on the spirit of the age that men, supposedly intelligent, can be swayed by, and applaud, such shallow sophistry. The irreverence of it, too, that men, Christians, Catholics perhaps, though God forbid,—that men, I say, should relish seeing Christ mocked and scourged and spat upon, relish hearing the Scriptures ridiculed or wrested round against our sacredest beliefs! The demon tempter of Our Saviour quoted Scripture, and likewise, too, his follower. Ah! the Bible *is* indeed an inexhaustible mine of facts, but if the miner have not on his forehead the lamp of faith, he finds no golden ingots of truth, but only useless dirt,—the ruins of the past and the bones of many an error long since dead. Refutation of such errors and flimsy arguments is time misspent. For us it is sufficient that the word of God infallibly says the devil does exist, and every miserable temptation and fall in our sinful lives proclaims his active presence. The doctrine of the

existence of angel guardians implies the existence of the devil as day implies night and defence denotes offence. As an answer, therefore, I remind you to-day of that consoling doctrine; viz., that "God hath given His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your feet against a stone."

Brethren, in tempting Christ with scriptural words to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the Temple, the devil trebly sinned. First, he misapplied the text. The ninetieth Psalm from which he quoted does not apply to Christ, but to the virtuous man amid the pitfalls of this world. Christ's soul enjoying perpetually the beatific vision and His body being the temple of the Most High, He had no need of angel guardians. He it is who guards them all, and though they came and ministered to Him, they came when Satan left; they came not to protect but to serve, for sin to Christ was an impossibility. To Peter in Gethsemane He said: "Knowest thou not that I can ask My Father and He will give Me presently more than twelve legions of angels?" Were there no such things as devils or were man proof against their wiles, the need of angel guardians would cease. Again, the devil misinterpreted. The stones of which the Psalmist speaks are spiritual stumbling-blocks, over which the angels help whoever has a mind to help himself. To literally, therefore, cast one's self from a lofty tower, or plunge down the precipice of sin, relying on God for safety, would be both tempting God and presuming on His

mercy. Finally, Satan purposely misquoted Scripture, suppressing the words, "that they keep thee in all thy ways," thus falsifying the entire tenor of God's promise, and throwing on God the burden of protecting man not only in the level paths of rectitude but also amid the precipices of sin. Thus it is the devil and his votaries garble the sacred word of God to foster vice. With murderous hand they poison the fountains of the knowledge of God to kill men's souls, and that they do not oftener succeed is due to God alone, whose mighty power reveals betimes their malice and out of evil brings much good.

Brethren, with the single exception of Christ's soul, all others have had and have their own duly appointed angel guardian. From the first moment of its creation until the settlement of its final destiny the angel of God is by its side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. In joy and sorrow, through virtue and through sin, the faithful monitor is ever there, beseeching, prompting, or applauding. From the lost soul he parts reluctant at the gates of hell, or stands triumphant at the heavenly portals to welcome in his charge. It helps us to realize the value of a human soul to think how God has hedged her round about with safeguards and protectors. A soul is God's most precious treasure, which He needs must leave for a time in a foreign land, but which meantime He guards with almost incredible care and vigilance. God's heart is where His treasure is, and the eyes of His providence are ever on her. The

law of Nature, and the divine and human laws are as three walls, or rather a trench, a moat, and battlement, thrown round the soul to guard her from her enemies. The innumerable benefits bestowed on her are as so many chains of steel, binding the soul to God, while the law of Christian charity, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," makes all the world her champion. But men are weak and oftentimes corrupt and traitorous, and so, lest man should fail in duty to his fellow man, and robbers steal the treasure, God posts a guard of angels of sure fidelity and matchless strength. How precious must that treasure be that God doth guard so jealously! What lofty dignity is man's! Christ said: "Despise ye not even the lowliest of My little ones, for I say to you their angels are ever gazing on the face of My Father who is in heaven." The humblest child is as a princeling to his heavenly Father, and always has his guard and tutor by his side. Not only to one but to many of His angels has God intrusted us, for besides the individual guardian of each soul, there is another for each parish, city, state, and nation—an angelic hierarchy. Thus the prophet Daniel speaks of the angels of the Jews, the Greeks and Persians. Besides, St. John in the Apocalypse, writing to the Asiatic Bishops, styles them the seven angels of the Church in Asia, and Christ, concerning John the Baptist, quotes the words of Malachias: "Behold I send My angel before thy face who shall prepare thy way before thee." Bishops, pastors, therefore, and preachers of the word of God, as well as parents and

pedagogues, are by reason of their office, angel guardians. Behold then the vast array of visible and invisible forces God has marshalled in the cause of righteousness and our soul's salvation! How happens it, you ask, that, notwithstanding, many souls are lost? Ah, the devil has his angels too, and he hath given them charge over us, to drag us down, if possible, into sin and hell. Angels of darkness invisible and visible too, for every foul blasphemer and perverter of mankind is Satan's accredited agent, even though he believes and tries to prove that devils do not exist. God in His wisdom permits such things to be to prove us and enhance our heavenly reward. But while He merely tolerates the devil and his works, the whole activity of the guardian angels is by God's express command. Not but that the angels are right eager for the work, for loving God, they love God's images, our souls, for whom He died, and ardently desiring our salvation, they closely guard us in all our ways. Along the steep and rocky path of life, by awful precipices and over yawning chasms, up the narrow way of virtue, they lead us heavenward. Ah, how many times we have stumbled, aye, and fallen! How often had our fall been final were not God's sweet angel there to lend a helping hand! The way of life is hard, and for the most part tiresome, but for the just man doubly so. The wicked ship their oars and give themselves to carousal and debauch while drifting toward the cataract, but the virtuous must pull up-stream and strain incessantly. There is no pause or break in our life's

journey. As men aboard ship, whether they sit or sleep, are ever moving on, so on the road of life even when we rest neglectfully or slumber in forgetfulness, we are ever moving on. Things glide by us and are forgot, the joyful and the sorrowful alike. So on a journey pleasant fields and stately homes and barren wastes are seen and passed and left behind. We step in the footprints of those who went before, and others follow after us in ours, and where those were but yesterday we are to-day, and where we are to-day others will be to-morrow. Ask the money in your pocket how many men have called it theirs; ask your land how many owners it has had since time began, and learn from them that life is a journey—that man has here no permanent abiding-place. How hard is the climb to eminence! yet pontiffs even and kings are barely seated on their thrones when lo! they must make way for others. And woe to us should we forget we are but passing through! Woe to us if we should load ourselves down with worldly goods, or gaze too long or lovingly on the things we pass, for the night of sin will overtake us and those robbers and wild beasts—the devils—work our ruin. Angels and ministers of grace defend us, for woeful need have we, poor wayfarers, of their guidance and protection!

Brethren, in their hands the angels bear the just man up, lest perhaps he dash his foot against a stone. Seven times a day the just man falls and he still continues just, for the guilt of sin is not so much in the falling as in the staying down. The angel guar-

dian's first concern, therefore, is to awake his charge from sin. You remember how St. Peter, bound with two chains, was kept in prison to be executed on the morrow, and how his angel guardian came in a flood of light, and woke him up, and knocked away his fetters, and set him free. Peter is there a figure of a sinner chained to his sin by long habit and presumption of God's mercy, and entirely oblivious of his doom. Then comes his angel guardian, rousing him, giving him light to see his folly, and strength to shake off his lethargy, and lo! there is joy in heaven over one more sinner doing penance. The angel's next anxiety is to keep his ward away from all the persons, places, and things, that might effect relapse. We read that Lot, a just man, lived amid the wickedness of Sodom and that his angel came and bade him flee and not dare look back, for so alone could he escape the fire and brimstone soon to shower on that fated city. Lot hesitated to obey, and then the angel seized him and forced him out the walls. Oh how many times God's angel has to warn the penitent; to force him by disease or poverty away from the occasions and companions of his former sinful life! And when the penitent, disobeying, still looks back, how often is the sweetness of escape turned to salty bitterness! Thirdly, the angel labors to have his convert persevere. The prophet Elias on his way to Mount Horeb to see and speak with God, was overcome with weariness, and turning aside fell fast asleep, but an angel roused him up and giving him to eat said: "Get thee on, a long way is still

before thee." Ah, many a penitent prodigal in the carrying out of his resolve to arise and go to his Father soon finds the way too long and arduous, and were not his angel guardian there to nourish and encourage him, he would never persevere to see God face to face on the blessed mount of paradise. Again the angel teaches his protégé how best to put to flight the robber devils that beset his path, viz.; by prayer and holy meditations. The young Tobias, at the angel Raphael's bidding, placed the entrails of the fish on burning coals, and thereupon the demon that slew the seven suitors of his bride was quickly driven away. So, too, the guardian angel counsels the one committed to his care to set not his entire mind and heart on earthly things, but to expend at least a portion of them in thought on hell or on the fire of God's love, for thus the devil must be routed and his temptations met. And since Our Lord Himself has warned us that the devil once ejected is ill content unless with seven other devils viler than himself he can return and regain possession, the angel guardian instructs his client how he can best prevent his last state becoming worse than was his first. Gedeon with thirty-two thousand armed men went forth against the Madianites, but an angel of God commanded that all the weak and timid should return, and immediately twenty-two thousand soldiers laid down their arms. The angel then bade Gedeon lead the ten thousand men remaining to a stream, and watch how each should drink, "for," said he, "those men alone are fit

for war who slightly bend and use their hands as cups, but all that lying prone shall lap the water up like dogs will surely fail in battle." The result left Gedeon scarce three hundred men, and yet they fought the enemy and gained a glorious victory. Oh blessed teaching of our angel guide, which proves the kingdom of God suffereth violence and that not the timid but the violent bear it away! To conquer in the struggle for salvation, we must not cling too closely to the world, nor drink too deeply of its pleasures, nor too eagerly feast upon its delicacies, but with our faces as much as may be ever turned to God we should seek and take from earth no more than our necessities demand. But not alone from unseen perils do our angels guard us, but from visible dangers too. Let Josue, Ezechias and Eliseus testify how angel hosts did battle for them in their hour of need. Judith returning with Holofernes' head declared: "The angel of God hath been my keeper going hence, and abiding there, and returning hither." From wild beasts, too, the angels guard us, as witness Daniel in the lions' den and the martyrs in the arena. From inanimate objects, too, as for example, the three youths in the fiery furnace. But most of all our angels stay the arm of God's wrath deservedly upraised to strike us. You remember the parable of the fig-tree, barren for three long years and which the owner ordered finally to be cut down and burned; but the gardener begged for one year more to prune and water it. Ah! how many a soul through boyhood, youth, and manhood bears no

fruit but sin! How many had been long since damned had not their angels begged for one more chance until, watered with affliction and pruned with poverty and sickness, they turned to God and brought forth fruit worthy of penance!

Brethren, in all religion there is no doctrine more poetical, more beautiful, more touching, and consoling than the doctrine of the angel guardians. It brings home to us our dignity as God's own children, His tender, fatherly love, the existence of innumerable foes to our salvation, our duty to coöperate with grace, and the purity and sanctity that should mark our lives, living, acting, speaking, thinking as we ever do in the presence of our angels. The effect of such a doctrine should certainly be to make salvation easier, and God forgive the sacrilegious hand that fain would rob us of it. Let us learn and frequently repeat that prayer:

> "Angel of God, my guardian dear,
> To whom His love commits me here;
> Ever this day be at my side
> To light and guard, to rule and guide."

So will our angels shield us from harm here and when our hour of dissolution comes, their hands will bear us as they bore the soul of Lazarus onward, upward, heavenward, into Abraham's bosom.

Second Sunday of Lent.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

"*He was transfigured before them.*"—Matt. **xvii. 2.**

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Life and death. II. Church's liturgy. III. Raphael's Transfiguration.
I. Heaven: 1. Inconceivable. 2. Pagan notions. 3. Earth's loveliest spots.
II. It consists: 1. In possessing God. 2. In being in accord with Him. 3. In enjoying delight of soul and body.
III. Its attainment: 1. Hand in picture. 2. Its meaning. 3. The Law and Gospel.
Per.: 1. Our idea of heaven. 2. Our efforts to attain it. 3. Our models.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, in the midst of life, alas, there is death, but happily, too, in the midst of death there is life. That is the idea of to-day's Gospel. He was transfigured before them. He had just been telling them of the tortures He was to endure, and of His death; of the lives of self-denial and the sufferings in store for them. "Far be it from us and Thee," they said, "to suffer such things." They were shocked and completely discouraged, and to fortify their shrinking souls He granted them a glimpse of heaven—He was transfigured before them. So, too, the Church; scarcely has the gloomy pall of the Lenten season closed around us, than she presents to our thoughts the glories of the Transfiguration. Like a skilful general to his army on the eve of battle, in the shadow of

death she speaks to us of the joys of victory and the peace and happiness of our heavenly home. Christ and His Church lead us heavenward by alternate appeals to our hopes and our fears—for mental food they give us a judicious mixture of the bitter and the sweet. That is the idea we find embodied in Raphael's masterpiece — "The Transfiguration." Below is depicted the misery of human life—the tortured demoniac, the frantic appeals for help, and the vain efforts of even the Apostles to afford consolation or relief. But a hand points upward to the tower of comfort and support—Religion represented in the ecstasy of the Apostles, and heaven—the happy consummation of it all—reflected in the serene loveliness of the Saviour.

Brethren, when God promised Palestine to Abraham, He bade him lift up his eyes and view that region and walk in the length and the breadth thereof; and Moses while still in the desert was bidden to send messengers abroad to inspect the promised land. So, too, should we with regard to our promised land—the kingdom of heaven; but who shall be able to walk through the length and the breadth thereof? Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God, says the Psalmist, but the greater part of heaven's glories must be left untold, because even to conceive them hath not entered into the heart of man. Like all things most intimately associated with us, heaven is the best known and the least known. That there is life everlasting, our craving for happiness testifies, but what heaven is, where it is, what

it contains, eye hath not seen nor ear heard. Even the imagination of a Dante or a Milton has found the description of heaven as hopeless a task, as did they seek to examine with the naked eye the midday sun. Reason, alone, unaided by faith, can give of heaven but the faintest, most shadowy picture. Among the ancient Pagan philosophers there are no less than two hundred and eighty-six opinions as to what constituted heaven, some holding it was the exercise of the highest virtue; others, the pursuit of knowledge; others, the enjoyment of all earthly blessings, etc. Their mistake was, first, in seeking to locate heaven in the enjoyment of some created thing, and since nothing created can have all the properties they instinctively felt the object of happiness should possess, they erred, secondly, in making that object not one as it should be, but the sum total of all created good things. So far, indeed, are all earthly things from being heaven, or a substitute for it, that it is only by excluding them and learning what heaven is not, that we can form any conception of what heaven really is. "In heaven," says St. Bernard, "there is nothing you can dislike and there is everything you can desire," and nothing short of that will ever satisfy the insatiable human heart. How, then, can earthly pleasure give the full joy of heaven, since pleasure, though sweet to the taste, grows bitter, and sours in the swallowing? How can virtue or knowledge be heaven, since virtue, however exalted, is perfected in infirmity; and knowledge, the most profound, is to learn how little

we know? How can honors be heaven, since uneasy lies even the head that wears a crown; or riches, which only whet the appetite for more; or power, since timid kings must have their warlike body-guards; or any or all created goods, since back of each we see the grim figure of death awaiting his turn? Some dying saints, they say, have received, ere death, the joys of heaven; and oftentimes, in dreams, we traverse fields Elysian, but, apart from empty dreams or doubtful vision, there is no heaven here. There is an island in a southern sea—the isle of Capri—the loveliest spot on earth—where Nature rivals God for man's affections, and God, to hold man's love, must needs perform a yearly miracle; and tourists call it paradise; but among the peasants I found the direst poverty, nor aught of happiness save one, a lonely hermit on the mountain top, his thoughts intent on God. Another day in the great St. Peter's, thronged with people from every land, the Pontiff celebrated Mass, and when the elevation came and every head, from prince to peasant, bowed, and sword and muskets clanged as soldiers kneeled, and a tiny ray of light played round the Pontiff's head, and a tiny ray of sound from a silver bell alone broke the stillness, till down from the dome came the heavenly music of the trumpeters—then people said 'twas heaven, and, truth to say, 'twas like it—but no! many a sinful, unbelieving heart was there, many a sorrow-laden soul; many a form bending under a weight of woe as heavy as that of the heartbroken Leo; but for heaven, we must look higher still—to

the consecrated Host, to the transfigured Saviour, to God; for we read in St. John, that this is "eternal life—to know Thee—the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Brethren, the vision, the possession, of God, and that alone, is heaven, just as the loss of God, and that alone, is hell. Our yearning for happiness will not be appeased by shadows of God's perfections such as creatures are; it demands the reality—God Himself. "When Thy glory shall have appeared," says the Psalmist, "I shall be satisfied." And never sooner—and why? "Because," says St. John, "we will be like Him when we see Him as He is." Our happiness and that of God will be identical, consisting in the contemplation of Himself—the all-true, the all-good, the all-beautiful. As the moon and stars catching the sun's rays are made to resemble the sun itself, so the beatified souls shine like the Sun of Justice Himself, in the kingdom of their Father. The riches of the beatific vision fill the measure of all our heart's desires. "I am thy reward, exceeding great," says the Lord. Our soul with its memory, understanding, and will, is a triangle of infinite extent, which this earthly globe can never fill, which nothing can ever fill but that other infinite triangle, the three in one—the triune God, who fills it with good measure and pressed down and flowing over. Besides the riches of the Divinity, we will enjoy in heaven unlimited power—a certain omnipotence. Our wills shall be so attuned to that of God, that our wish becomes His and His ours, so that of us as of Him it

will be true that we will be able to do all things in heaven and on earth and no one shall be able to resist our will. And as for honors, He has promised that whosoever shall have conquered in the battle of life, He will give him to sit with Him in His throne, even as He hath conquered and sitteth in the throne with the Father. If, even here, worldly power is transitory and the glory of the saints more enduring than brass, how much more so hereafter, where true merit is never overlooked and honors are eternal! Our temple of fame will there be founded on the eternal rock and not, as here, on the shifting sands of time. And as for pleasure,—who shall foretell the joys of heaven! "Lord, it is good for us to be here," cried the three Apostles, and in the ecstasy of the moment, forgetful of all else, they proposed to build three tabernacles wherein the vision might last and they enjoy it forever. When the Queen of Saba visited Solomon she exclaimed: "O blessed are thy servants who stand before thee always and hear thy wisdom!" But far more blessed they who stand forever face to face with the God of Solomon—the Author of wisdom and goodness. If faith, hope, and charity, are at the bottom of every true enjoyment here, as they are, what will be our delight when faith becomes the vision of God, when hope becomes possession, and charity is perfected! Delight, not for the soul alone, but for the body too—where the eyes shall feast on the glories of God, of Mary and the blessed; and the ears be ravished with heavenly music; where loving friends are reunited to share

each other's joys, not for a day or a year, but forever. "For God," says St. Paul, "shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, but joy perennial, and happiness eternal." And all this in a land as lovely as a dream. Look up to heaven on a starry night and reflect, if the outer walls of God's city are so magnificent, what must be the splendor of the interior! Consider all this and you will say with the Psalmist: "Thy friends, O God, are made exceeding honorable." You will agree with St. Paul that "the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared to the glory to come."

Brethren, I would be to you, this morning, the hand pointing to the transfigured Saviour—to heaven. I would have that vision so fill you with hope and encouragement that you would exclaim: "Lord, it is good for us to be here"—that your thoughts would wander thither often—that you would ardently desire to abide there forever and act accordingly. And what, you ask, must I do to gain eternal life? "If you would enter into life," says Our Lord, "keep the commandments." How small the labor! How unspeakable the reward! In the Old Law, to keep the commandments was a difficult task, for man had no example to follow. God said to Abraham: "Walk thou before Me and be perfect and I will be your reward, exceeding great." But in the New Law, Christ leads the way, and only asks that each take up his cross and follow Him—only asks that each perform the ordinary duties of his state and

patiently endure the ills of life, from the higher motive of pleasing God and gaining heaven.

Brethren, are we doing that little? Do we regard heaven as a shadowy myth or a reality; or if a reality, do we act up to it? What are we doing, what are we willing to do for heaven? Not half, I venture to say what we would endure to gain a purse of gold, or a fat office, or a moment of sensuous pleasure. Consider the mighty efforts men put forth to accomplish worldly ends—a loss of energy which, if rightly used, would raise the whole world up to God. On the other hand, consider how little is done for heaven; how rare the ideal Christian. Ah, we sow sparingly, and unless God, out of pure benevolence, gives the increase, we will reap sparingly. Mediocrity is the curse of modern Christianity, for he who is content with mediocrity is the devil's right-hand man. And yet, mediocre as we are, we expect the reward of saints. Think of the saints—the lives they lived and the deaths they died, and ask yourself—how like am I to them, what will become of me, since even they trembled for their destiny? Not that we can all be monks and nuns, but we can, at least, cultivate their spirit. If we cannot be poor in fact, we can be poor in spirit. If we cannot suffer persecution and die martyrs, we can, at least, be meek and humble. If we cannot take the vow of chastity, we can, at least, be clean of heart. And talk as we may, criticise as we may, we must admit that the humble monk and gentle nun have best solved the problem of salvation. Mark them well; their calm faces, and sweet plaintive

voices, and spare frames and gentle manners, and hearts weaned from the world, and wills subdued. And though their meekness meet with insult and their purity with slander and their gravity with suspicion, still they have Christ for their portion, and enjoy a continuous ecstasy before their transfigured Saviour. Brethren, let us follow their lead, that when they shall have come into the high places prepared for them, you and I also may take our lowly station in the kingdom of the Father.

Third Sunday of Lent.

Death.

"*He that is not with Me is against Me, . . . but blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.*"—Luke xi. 23, 28.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. One thing all-important. II. Death sure. III. Settles all.
I. Saint: 1. Life in world. 2. Religious life. 3. Death.
II. Sinner: 1. His life. 2. His sickness. 3. His death.
III. Lie goes: 1. Through life and conversion. 2. Obsequies. 3. Into grave and beyond.
Per.: 1. Our life. 2. Our death. 3. Art of dying well.

SERMON.

Brethren, there is one thing, and one thing only, in earth or heaven to be loved and gained—our souls' salvation: which if once gained, we have gained all. There is one thing and one thing only in earth or hell to be feared and avoided—mortal sin:

which if not avoided, all is lost. There is one moment, and one only, in which we shall gain all or lose all—one moment sure to come, but when, God only knows —our one single last moment—our death. God has said to each of us: "Remember, man, that thou art dust and into dust thou shalt return," and our own experience proves there is no exception, for death knocks with impartial hand at the peasant's cot and at the palace gates of kings. Of what shall we die? When, where, shall we die? Oh, what matters it! The real question is, how shall we die? How shall we die? As a man lives, so shall he die. It is appointed unto man once to die and after death the judgment, but the issue of that supreme moment and trial—whether happiness or misery eternal—rests with us. And oh! remember and remember, and again, I say remember, that a man can die but once, and that a bad death is therefore an irreparable misfortune.

Brethren, we will meditate to-night on death. Not death in the abstract, but death as it actually is—in the dying. We will consider a good death, and the life that led to it; and again, a bad death and the life that led to that; and finally we will consider which life more closely resembles our own and hence which death is likely to be ours.

Brethren, the servant of God to the side of whose death-bed I invite you this evening is in simplicity and innocence a mere child and all but a child in years. She is and always has been a delicate little soul, of great beauty of face and form, but far greater of mind

and heart—a tenderly nurtured, gentle, loving little soul, whose very delicacy and helplessness endeared her to her more robust brothers and sisters and made her the darling of her parents. There was one especially who loved her dearly, and would have deemed it a blessed privilege to have been permitted to devote his entire life to her happiness. Ah! hers was a happy home, and bright were life's prospects before her, but still she was not content—there was something she felt she ought to do for God, she knew not what, and she thought and worried and prayed. But at last she made up her mind; she plainly heard her heavenly Spouse saying to her: "Arise, My beloved, and come." So she laid aside her rich worldly attire, and gave up her portion of the inheritance, and without sob or tear she bade adieu to her parents and family and entered the convent. There she has spent several of the happiest years of her life; years of toil and privation that would have shattered many a stouter frame; years of tender devotion to God's little ones and God's poor; years of prayer and intimate communion with God. And there we find her to-night, in the convent, dying. Attired as a Sister she sits in an armchair, for it distresses her to lie down, waiting for her heavenly Spouse to say once more: "Arise, My beloved, and come." The lamp is shaded, and the intense silence is broken only by the labored breathing of the patient, or the ticking of the clock, or the click of a rosary as the silent Sisters come and go. And presently the priest arrives with the Blessed Sacrament to prepare that soul for

God by Viaticum and Extreme Unction. By a strange coincidence he is the dear old friend of her early youth. He has seen much of the world since then, having had to mingle with all sorts and conditions of men, but the hardest trial of his life is to tell this poor child that she is soon to die, and that she must be reconciled to the will of God. Ah, what need to tell her! for has she not longed for this hour and prayed often in the words of St. Paul to be dissolved and be with God? She wishes to make a general confession and all withdraw. General confession! A collection of mere trifles, and yet she shows a sorrow for her sins worthy of a Magdalen. She has been impatient—she has loved some of the Sisters more than others—she has kept all to herself a beads her little dying brother gave her as a keepsake—she would like to see her parents and her little sister for their sakes, but for her own she would rather die ere they arrive that she may give herself more freely to God—she was ordered to take more rest and nourishment and did not fully obey. Then the confessor asks a few questions, and her great bright eyes open in silent wonder, for he speaks of things she does not understand—of sins she did not know existed. "Father, have I made a good confession?" "My poor child, yes." "Father, do you think I will be saved?" Saved? What can the man answer? With tears in his eyes and with trembling voice he says: "My poor child, may God help me and my other poor penitents if you find salvation difficult. But," he continues, "throw yourself on the mercy of God

whose body and blood you are about to receive, and beg Him with me that on leaving you He may take you with Him." And so he gives her Holy Viaticum, and he anoints her five senses with the holy oils, feeling sure, however, these senses have never been defiled by mortal sin. When all is finished with the last blessing, it is evident their prayer is answered, for already her agony begins. Agony! No, it is not so, for as one lives, so shall one die. Her death is as gentle as was her life. A loving smile for her dear Sisters; a glance at the priest on her right as she whispers: "Jesus;" a glance at Mother Superior on her left as she murmurs: "Mary," and she dies with the sweet name of Joseph on her lips—Joseph who procured for her the grace of dying as nearly as possible as he died—in the arms of Jesus, the Priest of priests, and of Mary, the Virgin of Virgin Mothers. Ah! parents who arrive too late, why mourn that heaven is richer by one more saint? The very expression on her dead face bids you rejoice, for it reflects the peace of her soul. The old and the poor lament, but they mourn not her loss but their own. Why dread a death like hers? The little ones she taught crowd round her corpse as familiarly as though she lived. What a blessed sight was that—some two score little tots sitting around, silent and serious, wondering, no doubt, that their dear Sister, usually so active, should lie so quietly in their midst. And one little fellow she was forced lately to chastise now comes to pour out his sorrow and forgiveness in a passion of tears. Ah! not sorrowful or repulsive is

a death like hers, but all joy and peace and consolation. Surely precious in the sight of God and man is the death of God's saints.

Brethren, let us turn now to another death-bed; let us accompany the priest on his next sick call. A hurried call at midnight, a man dying, for God's sake hurry. And hasten he does, and as he goes along he asks for further particulars. The patient is a man of some consequence—one the world would by no means call a bad man or a bad Catholic, but whom the Church would by no means call a good one. In fact he is a man of the world, subject to various bad habits—some said he drank, others questioned his business methods, and others hinted at a dark side to his private life—anyhow, he committed many mortal sins which he confessed occasionally, only to fall soon again. One night a week or ten days ago he caught cold returning from a social carouse. Next day he tried to be around as usual, but feeling deathly ill, he returned to bed and the doctor was called. "Fever, but nothing serious," was his verdict. But the day passed and the night came. O God, the weary night of torture! And another day passed and another night came and so on, and still "nothing serious" was what the doctor said. But the fever grew, so even the doctor began to doubt. A consultation was held, and the verdict was "serious." One more visit and the answer to the usual question was "hopeless." All now know what to expect, but no one dares tell the patient lest it worry him and make him worse. But when selfish interest is at stake they

do not hesitate to worry him. The loving wife, forsooth, and the dutiful children call in the lawyer and advise that a will might as well be made now as later. And oh, what a trial is that for the poor worldling! A rich man undergoes three distinct agonies: when he makes his will; when he settles his spiritual affairs, and when his soul leaves his body. The making of a will! The scratching of the pen is as a tearing of his vitals; every drop of ink is as a drop of his heart's blood; every item set down is a severing of a bond that binds him to earth. But it is done at last; he has given up all; hope seems to abandon him; he breaks down and sobs out piteously: "Naked did I come forth from my mother's womb, and naked do I return into the womb of my mother earth." And now, and now only, does he remember and fully realize he has an immortal soul—a soul of infinite value in the sight of God—a soul to save which was the one grand work of his life, the one reason for his creation. But alas! for the greater part of his life his soul has been dead. It is dead even now of a hundred self-inflicted mortal wounds—of a hundred mortal sins. "False wife, false children, you pretend to grieve over the death of my body, will you not try to save the life of my soul? You try to relieve my temporal sufferings, will you do nothing to save me from eternal torments? For God's sake bring the priest." And so the priest comes and he performs his sacred functions with horrible doubt and misgiving at his heart. He enters that fetid chamber of death to take that poor agonizing soul, half-crazed with suffering,

stupid with opiates, frantic with remorse for the past, and terror of the future—to take that soul into the presence of its God to confess and crave pardon for its sins. It is the second death-agony. How remember all those nameless sins? How make good in one all the fruitless confessions of the past? How raise his mind and heart in a few moments up from earth, aye from hell itself, up to the throne of God? "Father," he cries, "I cannot do it; I cannot go on; God help me, I am lost." But the priest encourages him by words of hope and consolation—hope, where he sees but little hope, and consolation which he himself does not feel. But at last the confession is made, such as it is. "Are you sorry for your sins?" "Father, I am sorry," he cries, but at the same time the priest feels sure that were this man restored to health, he would sin the same sins again, and the dying man himself seems to hear the demons around him chant: "When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be; when the devil was well, no more a monk was he." Nay, God Himself seems to laugh at this mockery, for from the Blessed Sacrament in his breast the dying man seems to hear: "You come to Me, not for love of Me, but through fear of hell. You abandoned sin only when sin abandoned you. Almost all your life have you deserted Me, and therefore will I desert you now in the hour of your need." Deserted by God, the devil seems to retake possession of him and urges him to despair. Ah! there was a time long ago, when, to induce him to sin, the devil preached him long sermons on the ease of repentance

and the infinite mercy of God, but now he reminds him only of the infinite malice of sin and the rigor of God's justice. "Are you confident when a St. Jerome, after having served God faithfully forty years, still trembled for his destiny? Do you presume to look forward to a place in that heaven where naught defiled can ever enter in? Do you trust in this sham reconciliation with God, when the same St. Jerome tells you not one of every ten thousand death-bed conversions is available to salvation; when St. Vincent Ferrer tells you it is a greater miracle to save a man after a life of sin than to raise the dead to life? The priest anoints your five senses with a little oil; will that, think you, undo all the mortal sins these same senses have perpetrated? He absolves you and says he has forgiven you your sins; you often questioned his power to do so in the past, do you admit it now? He gives you a little bread and says it is the body of the Lord; you doubted it in the past, do you believe it now? No, no; if these things be true, not heaven but hell will be your portion; so that your only consolation now is in the hope that priest and sacraments and Church are all sham; that there is no life beyond the grave; that there is no God." Such are the thoughts and temptations of the dying man. And the agony of his soul hastens the death of his body. His mind gives way under the strain; he moans and shrieks by turns as though suffering a foretaste of hell. He struggles with those that hold him as though they were demons. His eyes roll wildly, his mouth foams, he frequently buries his face and teeth

in the pillow, and his hands clutch convulsively, making those that hold them feel what a fearful thing it is to hold the hand of a dying man and feel the soul within him struggling for liberty. But the struggle is nearly ended—one last great effort; a stretching to the utmost of every muscle of the body; a momentary startled expression of countenance, a ghastly upheaval of the eyes, and then the mouth gapes slowly open and with one long, weary moan of despair, he breathes out his soul. "Vengeance is Mine," saith the Lord, "and I have repaid, for he sought Me and he found Me not, but he died in his sins." Oh do not leave that chamber of death without fully realizing what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. Of what good now to him are all that man's honors, riches, pleasures? They are all here behind him, while he has gone forth into eternity poor and naked and miserable. His life was a failure, for he left undone the one work he should have done; he lost the one treasure he should have gained. Not only was his life a failure, it was a lie. He belied the God of all truth by turning away from the one end for which he was intended and created. He lied to the world by clothing his interior corruption in a cloak of outward respectability. He lied to the Church when he dared to gain admission to her sacraments by false promises of amendment. He lied to his little children by imposing burdens on them he could never bear, by asking them to practice virtues he himself never possessed. And as a man lives, so shall he die. His life was a lie; a lie also was his

death. He repeated promises he would never have fulfilled had he recovered. He said he detested sin, when he only feared it and trembled for its effects. The sorrowful wail of his widow is a lie, for she is already thinking of her becoming mourning and its effect on a possible substitute for the dead. The tears of his children are lies, for they are even now silently speculating on the terms of the will. The shameful praises of the callers are lies; the pompous funeral is a lie; the grandiloquent funeral oration is a lie, for they all attribute to the dead virtues he never had. They all give honor where honor is not due. Nay, the lie follows him to the very edge of the grave in the inscription on his tombstone; nay, into the grave in the bright breast-plate on his coffin; nay, beyond the grave, for his soul has gone to dwell forever with that liar and father of lies—the devil. Oh, would to God that such deaths were rare; that such was not the death of hundreds and thousands of Christians, of hundreds of Catholics! For as a man lives so shall he die; and since the vast majority of men daily insult their God by sin, therefore, "vengeance is Mine," saith the Lord: "and I will repay, for they shall seek Me in the hour of their need and they shall not find Me, but they shall die in their sins, for Amen, I say to you, if a man deny Me before men on earth, I will deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

Brethren, as a man lives, so shall he die. As we live, so shall we die. And judging from the lives we are leading, which of these deaths may we reasonably

expect to be ours? O God grant it be that of the saint, but is there one point of resemblance between our lives and hers? O God forbid it should be that of the sinner, but are we not men of the world, careless Catholics, relapsing sinners like him? If he were freed from hell and sent back to live life over again, what a great saint he would become! That grace denied to him, God grants to us to-night. We are plodding through life as though never to die. Men are dying all round us, but we look on unmoved. Our hearts, like muffled drums, are beating our funeral march to the grave. The sun will rise some morning soon, and streaming into our chamber, reveal our bodies cold and stiff and dead. The world will go about its business as usual and we will be laid away and forgotten. These hands of mine will wither; the flesh will fall from my face; my jaws, as though in grim humor over the folly of my life, will assume that horrible death's-head grin, and my whole body of which I am now so careful will become one fetid mass of corruption and decay. And my soul; where will it be? Ah, as a man lives so shall he die. The fate of my soul after death depends on the tenor of my life. Every moment of life should be a preparation for death, for on the issue of my death depends the complete success or failure of my life. St. Aloysius one day at play was asked: "What would you do were you told you would die within the hour?" and he replied: "I would continue my recreation." Doing all for the glory of God, even his recreation was a preparation for death. Seminarists prepare for death

monthly. But no soul of saint or seminarian is more precious before God than mine, and to me its salvation is infinitely important. Therefore I will rehearse my death-scene often that I may acquire the art of dying well. I will occasionally imagine myself in my last agony, with a bandage round my fevered brow, with the crucifix in my hand, the clammy death chill creeping over my body, the silence broken only by my labored breathing, the sobs of my friends, and the priest's voice saying: "Depart out of this world, O Christian soul." From that position on my death-bed I will glance back over my life repeating: "As one lives so shall he die." Ah, then will appear in their true colors the blindness and folly of mankind, the vanity of riches and pleasures, and all earthly happiness. Then will I realize that for me my soul is the one created good, sin the only evil, my last, the all-important moment of my life. Then will I see which of my present doings I would be likely to regret at the last. Then will I begin to correct the evil of my ways—begin to live a good life that I may die a good death. If in all my works I remember my last end, I will never sin. Grant, O God, that the lives of all here may henceforth be so ordered as to gain for them the grace of a happy death. Grant, O God, that falling gently asleep in death we may awake in eternity to hear not the thundering anathema of God's justice: "Depart from Me, ye wicked," but rather the sweet summons of His infinite mercy: "Arise, My beloved, and come."

Fourth Sunday of Lent.

The Duties of Wealth.

"And Jesus, seeing the multitudes, had compassion on them, and said to His disciples: Give ye them to eat."—Matt. xiv. 14, 16.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Argument for Divinity. II. Christ's magnetism. 3. Unselfish sympathy.
I. Christ's goodness: 1. Hardships and disappointments. 2. Uncharitable rich. 3. Philip's protest.
II. Postprandial: 1. Why gather fragments? 2. Man insatiable. 3. Superfluous wealth.
III. Objections: 1. Vices of poor. 2. Miseries of poor. 3. Three Gospel millionaires.
Per.: 1. Kings Jesus and Herod. 2. Sequel. 3. True fame and reward.

SERMON.

Brethren, in the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes I see many lessons as beautiful as they are useful. I find there an answer to the modern infidel who impugns Christ's divinity. When the Greek painter Apelles visited the studio of the artist Protogenes during the latter's absence, he simply drew on the canvas a single line of such exquisite delicacy and proportions that on returning and seeing it, Protogenes immediately exclaimed: "Apelles hath been here, for by one hand alone could that have been executed." In the stupendous miracle to-day recorded, the people seeing unmistakably the hand of God, cried: "This is indeed the Promised One—the Messias"—and they hailed Him as their King.

Again in this history I see an instance of Christ's wondrous power over the minds and hearts of men. Orpheus, they say, moved rocks and trees by the magic of his music, and birds and beasts were tamed by the eloquence of Francis of Assisi, but the music of Christ's speech was more alluring still, for it held even His enemies spellbound—it led captivity captive. Wiser than Solomon, more eloquent than Demosthenes, never did man speak as He, and hence the thousands, forgetful of all else, followed Him far into the wilderness. But the lesson I would set before you to-day deals not with Christ's almighty power in deed or word; rather it concerns His sublime unselfishness, and His tender sympathy with the needy and unfortunate. Seeing the multitudes, He had compassion on them and said to His disciples: "Give ye them to eat."

Brethren, for some weeks previously so busy had been Christ and His disciples in and around Capharnaum, preaching and healing, that the Gospel says they had had scarcely time to eat. Hence it was that Jesus gently drew His immediate followers apart, and embarking sailed with them across Genesareth to the opposite shore. But the thousands in Capharnaum, bound for the Passover at Jerusalem, were not to be denied. Hurrying as best they could around the lake's northern shore, they presently arrived at the mount to which the little band had retired for rest and nourishment. Brief rest, slight nourishment, for immediately they descend and resume their labors. It is worthy of notice that the Hebrew words used to

describe the provisions the Apostles had carried with them indicate that the five barley loaves were of the cheapest kind, and the two fishes a species of sardine. So fared the God-man, though His was the earth and the fulness thereof. And that such austerity was His rule of life is further proved from the fact that when after His Resurrection He reappeared on Genesareth's shore, His preparing for them the selfsame meal, regardless of the splendid fish miraculously caught, was to them sufficient proof of His identity. Yet, though the loaves and fishes are their all, they grudge them not to the hungry multitudes. Ah, Brethren, what lessons here for all of us! What self-sacrifice in the cause of humanity, no matter how discouraging the results! His mission to Nazareth had been fruitless, they had rejected and sought to kill Him. Capharnaum had followed Him because it saw the miracles He did; and this vast multitude, because they have eaten of the loaves and fishes, call Him Prophet and hail Him as their King. Seeing, they see not, and hearing, they do not understand, for the one return He craves they fail to give; viz., faith in His divinity. That, and that alone, was all He sought, but from first to last, from His rejection by the Nazarenes to His weeping over Jerusalem, His search was one long disappointment. Yet despite ingratitude and unbelief He moves among them as untiringly and impartially as the sun that shines alike on good and bad, feeding the famished, and healing the afflicted. Oh, how many there are, who, placed by God securely on the mountain of pros-

perity, shamefully forget the starving multitudes below. Selfishly they take their ease, wallowing in luxury, with never a thought of their sacred obligations. Christ stands between them and the throng, and begs with outstretched hands for bread that His poor may eat. What answer does He get? Do they with childlike faith place at His feet their all? Do they remember that their riches should constitute them Christ's disciples? Do they return the wealth He gave them that He may bless and break and distribute to the needy? Alas! alas! They turn their backs on Him and them. "Send them away," they say to Him, "this horrid rabble, bid them begone and get a meal as best they may. It is an outrage to bring them clamoring here, disturbing our aristocratic quiet, marring the beauty of the landscape, trampling our parks and lawns. What! feed a throng like that! Consider the expenses of my city palace and my country villa, my crowded stables and my kennel of dogs; see the outlay for my wine-cellar, our dinners, our theatre-parties, our trips abroad, our jewels and finery—why, I have not a cent to spare nor a crumb for your ragged mob." Thus once on a time spoke Dives to the starving Lazarus, and Dives in consequence was buried in hell. So acted Judas when he clutched the purse and tied the strings and swore his Master should not have two hundred pennies wherewith to purchase bread,—and Judas, you know, was a thief, and presently betrayed his Master for money and finally hanged himself. So, too, the uncharitable rich are thieves who appropriate the

wealth confided to them by God on behalf of His poor. They are unjust stewards and I say to you, God's wrath shall hold them prisoner; aye, and sell them with their wives and children into slavery to the devil till the last farthing of restitution has been made. Christians, forsooth! If a brother or sister be naked and want daily food and the rich man say: "Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled," yet give them not the necessaries of life, is that Christ's teaching and example? To have the substance of this world, and to see one's brother in need and to steel one's heart against him, is that what Christianity means? Ah, no! for "in this," says St. John, "we know the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down not only our wealth, but, were it necessary, even our lives for the brethren." Go to, therefore, ye rich, weep and howl in the miseries that shall come upon you when your riches shall be corrupted, your garments moth-eaten, your gold and silver cankered, and when the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves God's wrath, for the cry of the poor you have defrauded hath entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. But, to be Christian, must we, like Andrew, relinquish all? Is not Philip's hesitancy justifiable, for what indeed is the little we can afford among so many? Oh, self, self, how cunningly it argues! "Bring hither the loaves and fishes," said Christ, "and bid the men be seated." Give according to thy means and leave the rest to Him. Give

not through pride or vanity or hope of gain, else your largest contribution will be small and little pleasing to the Saviour. But giving what you can, however little, give it with love of Him and His into Jesus' hands, and rest assured it will be multiplied indefinitely for you and them. Give with purest motives and with confidence. Pure motives will make the giving of even a cup of water meritorious of eternal life, and confidence in giving becomes faith. Fear not that poverty will overtake your generosity, for whosoever gives to the poor is creditor to the Lord, and is sure to be repaid a hundredfold. If you cast your bread on the human stream, you are sure to recover it—twelve baskets for five barley loaves—good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over will God give into your bosom.

Brethren, when the wondrous banquet was ended, Christ said to His disciples: "Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost." Doubtless there was little danger of their being lost, for the people would gladly have hoarded them against the morrow's needs. But the Master wished it otherwise. His lesson in altruism is for all, disciples and people alike. He bade His followers give their all to the hungry throng, and now He teaches the multitude to do to others as they have been done by. The object-lesson was one not only of unselfishness, but also of faith, of trust in God. It was as though He said: "Be not solicitous for the morrow. Your heavenly Father, who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies, is conscious of your needs. Give and it shall be

given you again, aye, twelve teeming baskets for your humble loaves and tiny fishes." With shame be it confessed, that the law of satiety holds good in every creature of God save man. The clouds rain down their surplus moisture, and lea and furrow drink their fill and pass along the residue to the parched plain. The blade and tree absorb but their share of nourishment from the soil, and the well-fed kine wander off leaving the manger unguarded. Man alone, though satisfied, can never be satiated. His lust for possession is all-absorbing. Possession, do I say? Dominion rather; for the most universal and stubborn error the world has ever known is that men are absolute masters of all they possess. Such detestable doctrine needs no refutation. God is, and His is the earth and the fulness thereof, and to Him each must render account of his stewardship. In the divine plan all are amply provided for. The rich from their riches may appropriate sufficient for their needs, "but that which remaineth," says Christ, "give alms." By every right of charity and justice the world's superfluous wealth belongs to the poor, and to deny assistance in cases of dire necessity is a crime against high heaven. The cry of the poor for help is simply the voice of God asking for His own. For Christ identified Himself with them in the words: "Whatsoever you do unto them, you do likewise unto Me."

Brethren, some will call this doctrine communistic, and point you to the improvidence and vices of the poor, but if to echo Christ is communistic, then Com-

munists let us be. Neither do we deny that the needy are oftentimes to blame for their condition, but God forbid we should trouble poor Lazarus about the mote in his eye as long as Dives' sports such a monstrous beam. Most of the poor man's vices are superinduced by his very poverty, and are in a measure attributable to those who could afford, but refuse, him relief. All men have faults, but the wage-earner has this to his credit that his life is one long purgatory. Though the rich man's wealth results from the poor man's toil, yet how often the toiler's fate is little better than that of the fowl that laid the golden eggs. Society is like a tree of which the laborers are the roots buried in the soil, deprived of the joy, the light, the liberty of God's fair creation, but sustaining withal and nourishing the upper limbs with their gay blossoms and rich fruits. They are the feet of the social Colossus, indispensable alike to the stomach and the head; yet how often do they go bare and bleeding! What wonder that the cold rises betimes from them to the entire body politic, and works the death of society through some mad revolutionary upheaval! For if the poor have their duties toward the rich, the rich also have their sacred obligations toward the poor that cannot be ignored. They should do on earth what the sun does in the heavens—diffuse the light and warmth of worldly comforts among the lesser bodies. They should be the great arteries of society conducting God's munificence to every dependent member of humanity. Such must have been the Creator's social plan;

else we might conclude that, though providing for the lilies, birds, and beasts, His fatherly solicitude is not concerned with the helpless poor. Reason and nature-study will convince the veriest Pagan of the duties of superfluous wealth. And for Christians, oh, in the face of Christ's teaching and example, can there be a doubt? Alas! whether it be doubt or niggardliness, it often happens that more shaking is required in a Christian than a Pagan, in a Catholic than a Protestant, land to bring down the fruit from the tree. Did Christ but come to-day He could find full many a barren tree to disappoint Him and evoke His curse. Multi-millionairism and direst poverty are most conspicuous to-day in Christian countries. Why? Because they are correlatives, and because our moneyed men are only nominally Christian. Were they sincerely such they would be guided by Christ's commentaries on their Gospel prototypes. In the Gospel there figure three multi-millionaires. The first, the good young man, whom Jesus loved, the would-be Apostle, who nevertheless when bidden to give his millions to the poor, sadly turned away. He represents to us the spiritual disadvantages inseparable from the mere possession of wealth, whereby even the best of men are not only excluded from the number of Christ's immediate followers, but also, as Christ said, find it as difficult to even enter heaven as a camel does to pass through the eye of a needle. The second multi-millionaire is he whose possessions so increased that his sole concern was to build larger storehouses, that, having laid up much

goods for many years he might take his rest and eat and drink and make merry. But no sooner was his plan accomplished than God said to him: "Thou fool! this very night do I demand thy soul of thee." Why was God so harsh with him? We do not read that his riches were ill-gotten, or that he turned away the needy. His crime was forgetfulness of others, selfishness, because, says Christ, "he laid up treasures for himself and was not rich towards God," and God's earthly representatives, the poor. The last and worst of the Gospel millionaires was Dives. He clothed himself in purple and fine linen and feasted sumptuously every day, but never a crumb would he give to Lazarus, dying of starvation on his doorstep. But Dives died and was buried in hell. Brethren, there is never a modern millionaire but can find his prototype in one of the Gospel three. Be it that riches are his only fault; belong he to the selfish class, or the unmerciful, he is sure to learn in the history of these three what Christ thinks of him and what will probably be his fate hereafter. Thou art not worthy to be My disciple; this night do I demand thy soul of thee; and judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.

Brethren, go back in thought to Jesus amid the throng, the miraculous banquet ended, blessing them, and with a gracious smile bidding them go in peace. What a contrast between that feast and that other just then being celebrated in King Herod's palace in honor of himself—his birthday. Lavish expenditure, sinful luxury, incest, with never a thought of the poor

without. Contrast the sequel of each event. King Jesus spends the night in prayer upon the mountain-side, and when the winds and waves arise He comes walking on the water and stills the sea and saves His shipwrecked followers. King Herod, drunk with wine and pleasure, swears to give his shameless niece her will, be it half his kingdom, and at her word presents her on a dish the head of the murdered Baptist. A striking lesson this as to the results of the use and abuse of wealth. For Christ is King to-day, and Herod and his house but an odious remembrance. To the selfish rich their wealth eventually proves a curse, and their names and memories are held in universal execration, but the generous giver stills the turbulence of the masses and becomes a second saviour of his people. "All the Church of the Saints shall declare his alms," says Scripture. Almsgiving is the surest guarantee of undying fame here and of rich reward hereafter, for "blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Passion Sunday.

The Malice of Sin.

"Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews, Which of you shall convince Me of sin?"—John viii. 46.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Christ's usual aspect. II. On defensive to-day. III. Why?

I. Nature: 1. Definition. 2. The intention. 3. Mortal and venial.

II. Malice: 1. Heaven and hell. 2. God's dignity. 3. Supreme good and evil.

III. History: 1. Fall of angels. 2. Fall of man. 3. Deluge, and Sodom and Gomorrha.

IV. Effects on soul: 1. Suicide. 2. Saint's vision. 3. Cure of sin is death of Christ.

Per.: 1. The innocent. 2. Penitents. 3. Sinners.

SERMON.

Brethren, Jesus Christ is presented to us to-day under a most unusual aspect. It was not the custom of the meek and humble Saviour to stand on the defensive—to repel a calumny, howsoever vile; an insult, howsoever gross; an injury, howsoever unjust. In the strength of His righteousness, He ignored alike the fawning tempter and the snarls of the world. In the hour of His deepest degradation He opened not His mouth. To Pilate and his perjured accusers He answered never a word, and even on the march to Calvary He allowed Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. No wonder such sublime submissiveness impressed the beholders—touched

even Pilate's stony heart, and converted Longinus and the dying thief. Yet passive though He was under wrong, there was one accusation, one calumny He never allowed to go unchallenged. "Do we not say well that Thou hast a devil?" the Jews demanded, and prompt and sharp came His indignant reply: "I have not a devil, for which of you shall convince Me of sin?" To my mind no other incident in the life of Our Lord more strongly emphasizes the detestable nature of sin. So repugnant was it that the mere imputation was sufficient to draw an indignant protest even from the long-suffering Saviour.

Brethren, sin is an offence in thought, word, deed, or omission against the law of God. It is an act of rebellion on the part of His child against the most indulgent of Fathers. It is an offence against Him who reads the reins and the hearts, and who consequently takes account not only of external transgressions, but also of interior thoughts and desires. Its guilt is founded especially on the accompanying thought, intention or advertence which gives to the sinful act its human character. Sin interrupts the friendly relations between God and the soul; turns their love into hate, and puts an end to that interchange of gifts which love entails. And since to serve God and in return to be revivified with His grace is the very life of the soul, therefore when this exchange has once been interrupted by sin, the unrepentant soul is thenceforth wounded or dead according as its sin was venial or mortal. Hence the

truth of St. Paul's words where he says that: "by one man sin entered into the world and by sin death," for the wages of sin, be it original or actual, is death.

Brethren, let us try for a moment to realize the malice of one mortal sin. "Who can measure the height of heaven," says Ecclesiasticus, "or who can measure the depth of the abyss?" And if the distance from earth to heaven or to hell be so inconceivable, who, I ask, can hope to measure the double space from the lowest circle of Gehenna to the top of heaven's dome? Yet, Brethren, that infinite distance is the measure by which we will have to compute the malice of one mortal sin. It can be said without exaggeration that the malice of such a sin is infinite. For the grievousness of an insult is measured by the difference in dignity between the offender and the one offended. An affront offered by one man to another socially his equal may be a matter of little moment, but an outrage perpetrated by a vagrant against the person of his king calls for the heaviest penalties. Now what King so high as God, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords? Or what pauper so poor and miserable before his sovereign as man before his Creator? God is a being of infinite dignity, and hence mortal sin is an infinite offence calling for an infinite punishment. Sin, in fact, is the direct opposite of God—mortal sin is the supreme evil, just as God is the supreme Good. But not all the minds of angels and men can ever comprehend the infinite goodness of God. Neither,

therefore, hath eye seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, to conceive the full extent of the malice of one mortal sin.

Brethren, let us read the history of sin from the beginning, and judge of its nature from its awful effects. What have been the effects of sin in heaven? We go back in spirit to the time prior to this earth's creation, when naught existed but God and His angels. We see in paradise those millions and billions of angelic spirits, second to God alone in the beauty of their natures, reflecting in their glorious attributes the perfections of the Divinity, basking in the full splendor of the beatific vision, and inconceivably happy in the possession of the All-Good. Ah! we see them as in a vision, and we seem to hear their heavenly voices chanting: "Sanctus, Sanctus," and intoning: "Glory to God in the highest"—but alas! even as we gaze, the voices, like an interrupted chorus, suddenly cease, and as when a thunder-cloud crosses the face of the sun, so the heavenly vision disappears. What has happened? Mortal sin hath entered heaven and blasted the glory thereof. Lucifer and his followers have given for an instant to their own splendor the homage due to God alone, and immediately glorious angels become loathsome devils. God smites His own fair creation, and like a thunderbolt Satan and his rebel comrades fall into the everlasting fire God's justice has prepared for them. Behold the first mortal sin; see its effect. For one mortal sin that lasted but a moment, one sin of thought without previous example or warning, for one such sin

did God condemn whole legions of His beloved angels to an eternity of excruciating torments. Oh, was not their punishment excessive—greater than their crime? Did not God act rashly and in anger? No, for our God is a just God. He punished them less than they deserved, for our God is a merciful God. He hath done and He will never repent, for our God is a wise God. Had they cried back to Him as they fell: "Father, give us but one moment for repentance, and we will serve Thee with an eternity of love and do penance with an eternity of sorrow," He would have answered them: "No, it is too late. You have sinned, you must undergo the penalty, for I am the Lord and I have sworn and I will never repent." Oh, Sin! what a monster thou art! to dare to enter into even God's own heaven; to blight the fairest work of His hands; to rob Him of His beloved angels; to populate with them the miserable hell you and you alone have created.

Brethren, turn you now to God's second creation. Baffled in His first merciful design to make creatures happy in the enjoyment of Himself, He determines on another trial, and so He creates the earth and man. To His own image and likeness He makes him; a little less than the angels He created him. He places him in an earthly paradise, and He gives him absolute dominion over his own animal nature and over the entire animal kingdom. There man would have lived a long life in the peaceful enjoyment of all imaginable blessings—no troubles from within, no care from without; no labor, no war, no

famine, or pestilence, no sickness, no death, but a life of happy contentment here, and then in God's good time a flight, soul and body, from the earthly heaven to the heaven of God. Oh! who can contemplate that ideal life without feeling his heart swell with gratitude for God's bounty, and sink with vain regret that it is lost to us forever, and burn with fierce hatred against the monster—mortal sin—that has come between us and our birthright? For, no sooner had man begun to enjoy it, than once more the insidious serpent crept in and ruined all. God commanded; man disobeyed. Why, O man, did you eat the forbidden fruit? Because the woman tempted me. Why, O woman, did you disobey your God? Because the demon deceived me. Aye, the demon—mortal sin—is again the destroyer, and against it again bursts forth God's hatred. "Cursed be the earth," He cries, "thorns and thistles shall it produce. I will multiply your sorrows. In the sweat of your brow you shall earn your bread, and at last, as dust you are, into dust you shall return." Look at our stricken parents as they fly from the face of God's anger out into the dreary world, and let their wailings be your answer to the question: What is the malice of a mortal sin? Let the clanging of the bolts and bars of heaven's gate as it closes, not to be reopened for four thousand years, be an answer to that question. Let the difference between the harmony in man's soul and in nature before sin and the disorder there after sin proclaim sin's malice. For man's rebellion against God was immediately

followed by an uprising on the part of all nature against man. His flesh is no longer subject to his reason and will; his appetites become inordinate, his inclinations, evil. The beasts of the field and the birds of the air array themselves against him. Earth, water, fire and air conspire for his destruction by the thousand and one dangers peculiar to each. See our exiled parents crushed under this avalanche of woes, hear them wailing like lost souls over the body of murdered Abel; behold the fleeing Cain, with the brand upon his brow, an outcast on the face of the earth—consider all these miseries and the numberless times that history has repeated itself since then, and let the whole be an answer to your question: What is the malice of one mortal sin?

Brethren, history has repeated itself. Consider the Deluge. "All flesh," says the Scripture, "had corrupted its way upon the earth and the whole earth was filled with iniquity." What a breach of filial respect would that be that could cause a fond father to regret ever having given being to his child! "Yet God," says the Scripture, "repented Him of ever having made man, and proceeded to destroy him." Imagine that awful scene. At the beginning of the forty days' downpour men looked on with indifference, then with surprise, then with horror. Presently there was a mad rush and struggle for the highest places, but slowly the water envelops even the highest. The mother dies holding aloft her babe; the lover perishes in a vain effort to save his beloved; the family clasps hands, sobs farewell and

is gone, until the last stifled cry of the last human being had rung out over the dreary waste. And over all the scene of horror who presides? God? Merciful Father, is this your work? No, no; He is a God of mercy still. This is not His, this is the work of mortal sin.

Again consider the two fair cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, with all their hundreds and thousands of inhabitants. What was it that made God send a storm of fire and brimstone from heaven to destroy these cities and make their very sites uninhabitable forever? It was that their sin had become exceeding great—it was mortal sin. Stand over against these cities with a light on your face and the smoke whirling about you, and listen to the roar of the flames and the shrieks of the victims and judge from its effects the awful malice of mortal sin. Alas! human history is for the most part a history of woes because it is a history of sin, whereas if sin had never entered the world, man would still be in the enjoyment of his original innocence with all its accompanying blessings. Therefore every calamity that has befallen or will befall the human race; every misery, past, present or future of our own lives are all directly or indirectly the effects of mortal sin.

Brethren, let us look at a soul in the state of mortal sin. What, O soul! is mortal sin to thee? Thou hast burst God's bonds, thou hast cast off His yoke, thou hast said: "I will not serve." An abandoned waif, God adopted, enriched and exalted thee, but thou hast despised Him, flung back His favors in His

face, and turned thee to the service of His arch-enemy—the devil. And now—now thou art the slave of sin, whereas before thou wert free with the freedom of the children of God. Nay, thou art worse than a slave—thou art dead. For sin when completed begetteth death. Oh! how unreasonable we are! When the body of a beloved dies we wail and lament, but when the soul dies in sin we shed never a tear. Yet what so dreadful as spiritual death! Natural death is sad, murder deplorable, but suicide worst of all, and the soul that sins commits spiritual suicide. One day a man jumped from an immense height, and landed almost at my feet. Bend with me over his shattered body, and see there a faint picture of a soul in mortal sin. A bruised and hideous mass; an expression on the face to make the stoutest heart quail. However comely that body may have been once it has lost all its beauty now. And his soul? Oh it was once innocent, adorned perhaps with many beautiful virtues, the cause maybe of bringing innumerable souls to God and worthy of a high place among the saints, but now there is no beauty in it—all is lost. See the passing school-children fly in terror from that body; so fly the angels from his soul. See the dogs fighting for his blood on the pavement; so the demons squabble over his poor lost spirit. Had he repented, his past merits would indeed have revived, but not now, for his sin lasts and will last forever. Behold that body, cold and stiff, the eyes staring but seeing not, the mouth gaping wide, the voiceless tongue lolling out, and the hands and

feet, manacled by death, without power to help himself or others. So, too, a soul in mortal sin lies helpless on the way to heaven, a stumbling-block and a scandal to those who would fain pass on. Hour by hour it grows livid and putrefies and charges the air with deadly infection. The officers of the law take the ghastly body and consign it to earth, and the ministers of God's justice, the devils, take the putrid, sinful soul and bury it in hell.

Brethren, a poor picture this of a soul in sin. It was once granted a great saint to see such a soul as God sees it, and he afterwards declared that he would rather endure any earthly torment than again behold so horrible a sight. "It were better," says St. Anselm, "to suffer hell innocent rather than enter heaven in sin, for innocence would be a comfort, even in hell, but guilt would be a torture, even in heaven." What, therefore, shall we say of an habitual sinner? His soul has died and is corrupting within him. He goes through life chained to a corpse. He lies down at night and clasps in a close embrace that horrid, putrid thing. Faugh! it is too horrible to think of. Let us pray God that should our souls ever unfortunately contract the hideous leprosy of sin we may quickly turn to Him for a cure.

The cure of sin! Ah, Brethren, here again we see that sin's malice is infinite, for it requires an infinite atonement. If the whole court of heaven with all the living saints and the holy souls in purgatory were to unite in an act of reparation for one mortal

sin, that act would fall infinitely short of satisfying God's outraged justice. Hence it was that to atone for man's sins the Word of God Himself was, if I may say so, obliged to come down from heaven and become man and suffer and die—as man, because man had sinned, and as God, because God only could cancel an infinite offence. Every drop of His bloody sweat in Gethsemani declares the malice of mortal sin—every stroke of the scourge, every thorn of His crown, every fall on Calvary's slope, the five nails that held Him on the cross. The frantic grief of Magdalen, Mary's heartbroken sobs and the moans of the dying Saviour, all proclaim the malice of mortal sin. Sin, and sin alone, reduced an ineffable God to the condition of the Man of sorrows, for His blood was poured out for many unto the remission of their sins.

Brethren, in your upturned faces to-night, I discern three classes—those who have never sinned mortally, those who have so sinned and repented, and those on whose souls grievous sin yet remains. Thank God there are some who, standing on their life's record, can demand defiantly of the world: "Which of you shall convince me of mortal sin?" Blessed be God that so many, though having wandered afar and miserably fallen, have yet been enabled by His grace to arise and return to their Father. Would to God that the conversion of even one sin-laden soul here to-night might gladden the Father's heart, and give joy to the angels of heaven. O sinful soul, however deplorable thy con-

dition, be not cast down, for with the Lord there is mercy and with Him plentiful redemption. His patient forbearance with thee in the past is a guarantee that with Him there is forgiveness. From the depths of your misery, from the bottom of your heart cry to Him and He will hearken to thee, for He wishes not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. Let the hatred of sin drive thee, let the love of God draw thee. There is forgiveness, there is forgiveness, if you will only repent, for "an humble and contrite heart the merciful Lord will never despise."

Palm Sunday.

HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION.

"*He humbled Himself even unto the death of the cross, wherefore also God exalted Him, that every tongue should confess the Lord Jesus.*"—Phil. ii. 8, 9, 11.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Christ's I. Humiliation. II. Exaltation. III. Acknowledgment.

I. Humiliation: 1. Knowledge and power. 2. Gethsemani. 3. Sold, scourged, crowned, and crucified.

II. Exaltation: 1. Died as seed. 2. Plant (Church) grew. 3. Glories of cross.

III. Faith spread by self-sacrifice: 1. Toward God. 2. Neighbor. 3. Self.

Per.: 1. God's hatred of sin. 2. Redemption. 3. Faithfulness to cross living and dead.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, Our Lord's tragic earthly career divides itself naturally into three parts, His private life, His public life, and His Passion, and each act or part ends

with a triumph. When, ere His hour had yet come, He at His Mother's bidding changed the water into wine at the marriage-feast of Cana, He manifested His glory, says the Gospel, and His disciples believed in Him. Again, at the close of His public mission, when for the last time He approached Jerusalem, the populace acclaimed Him in the words: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Lastly, at His Resurrection His final victory over death and sin was so unmistakably proclaimed that the world has not yet ceased to echo Alleluia! nor the doubting Thomases to confess Him as their Lord and their God. Now self-abasement preceded each triumph. In His youth He went down to Nazareth and was subject to Mary and Joseph; in His manhood He meekly became all things to all; in His Passion He utterly effaced Himself. St. Paul, with an eye to the close connection and dependence of these three, voluntary humiliation, spiritual exaltation, and the spread of faith, thus admirably sums up the Lord's life and its lesson: "He humbled Himself even unto the death of the cross; wherefore also God exalted Him, that every tongue should confess the Lord Jesus."

He humbled Himself even unto the death of the cross.

Brethren, try as we may, we shall never succeed in arriving at a just appreciation of the enormity of the Saviour's sufferings. "Thou alone," He says to His heavenly Father, "Thou alone knowest My ignominy, My confusion, and My dignity." The

majesty of Christ is adequately known only to the Father, and until He reveals it to us we shall never fathom the depths of Christ's voluntary humiliation. Of all created beings, in fact, man seems the least affected at Christ's sufferings, for while the sun grew dark and the earth quaked, and even the dead arose, the throng on Calvary scoffed or else looked on unmoved. Still, we perhaps, on sober second thought, can better realize the Passion of Our Lord. Christ, the All-Wise, knew that the greater His sufferings the more perfect would be our Redemption, and being omnipotent and prompted by an infinite love, His sufferings naturally exceeded all bounds. For what will not love, even carnal love, endure for its beloved! Jacob served Laban seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a day because of the greatness of his love. What dreadful torments the martyrs underwent for Christ, finite as was their love, and though limited the power of their persecutors to devise new tortures! In His task of satisfying the infinite demands of divine justice, Christ's knowledge and power and choice and charity knew no such limitations. Sustained by their heavenly Comforter, the martyrs exulted amid their agonies, but in His Passion Christ seems to have denied Himself the smallest consolation. In the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus we read how a sin-offering of two goats was made, one of which was sacrificed and the other allowed to go into the wilderness. These animals prefigured Christ's dual nature, the divine temporarily withdrawing itself while the human expiated the sins

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of men. In mind and soul and body, in all that it was and had, His humanity suffered. Anticipation of suffering, we know, is agony more acute than even the reality. This accounts for the sadness that so overwhelmed Christ after the Last Supper, and the horror of what was to come that seized Him in Gethsemani and forced from His body the sweat of blood. In the annals of human suffering no fact equally stupendous is recorded, because never was there woe like unto His woe. For over and above the chalice of bodily torture He was to drain to the dregs, He saw with God's eyes the world's sins, the ingratitude of men, Jerusalem's extermination, and the torments of the damned of which Jerusalem's destruction was but a tiny figure. If parents wail so over one son lost, how must He, the infinitely loving Father, have grieved over the loss of millions of His children. So utterly downcast was He that He seems to have dreaded being alone. Misery, they say, loves company. Though nothing was dearer to Christ through life than holy solitude, He now time and again interrupts His prayer to seek His Apostles. A sense of utter loneliness oppressed Him. Judas He saw already negotiating His betrayal, and the other Apostles asleep but sure to flee at the first alarm. In heaven, on earth, or in hell, He found no being who was not either permitting or desiring or actively procuring His destruction. His enemies the Jews, the Gentile Romans and the devils worked for it; His friends, the souls in Limbo longed for it; and His heavenly Father let them have their will. When God permitted

Satan to torture Job He bade him to spare Job's life, but not so now; it was completely the devil's hour and the hour of the power of darkness. Christ saw Himself like another Isaac bearing on His shoulders the wood of the sacrifice, while by His side, like a second Abraham, walked His Father, bearing in one hand, yes, the fire of love, but in the other, alas! the sword of justice. In all heaven there was no angel to come and stay His hand or point to a substitute victim. Aye, and another sword He saw of keener blade, the sword that was to pierce the heart of Mary standing by the cross. Eve looked upon the forbidden tree and Adam wrought our ruin by eating from it, and justice demanded that Mary should gaze on Jesus while dying on the rood. Abandoned by all she yet would cling to Him, but her very constancy, He saw, would only serve to aggravate His torments.

Brethren, the horror Christ conceived from His foreknowledge of His sufferings was justified by the event. The first indignity heaped upon Him was that of being sold as a slave or a beast, sold by His friend to His bloodthirsty enemies, sold for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver. Such was man's estimate of Christ's value—of Christ, who did not reckon His own heart's blood too dear a price wherewith to purchase man. But even the silver pieces were considered on second thought beyond His worth, for presently He was auctioned off, He and the outlaw Barabbas, and the multitude cried: "Give us Barabbas, but as for Christ, crucify Him, crucify Him." The healer of bodily ills, the restorer of the

dead to life, was rejected for a murderer! Then came the scourging, a punishment considered by all so shameful that Rome guarded by law her humblest or wickedest citizen from such indignity. In Christ's case, then, the tender body of the noblest of noblemen was subjected to chastisement usually administered only to rustics and to slaves. That His scourging was excessive, too, is evident, for to such pitiable state was He reduced that Pilate was led to hope the sight would move the people to repent and let Him go. But his expectation was not realized, for the multitude loudly demanded that the prisoner be further punished with crown and cross. The crown of thorns was a species of torture altogether new, unheard of before or since, the devil's masterpiece. The cross, too, was to the ancients what the gallows is to-day—an object of shame and horror. Modern justice is merciful enough to draw the black cap over the criminal's head and face to hide from his eyes the scaffold, but Christ was made to look upon His cross, to embrace it and to carry it. He, so dignified, so gentle, so modest, made to run half-naked through the streets, to be exposed presently quite naked on the cross! And through it all He never uttered a complaint. Animals that cry out in pain do not excite such pity as the horses and sheep that suffer dumbly, and loud-mouthed human sorrow meets with scanty sympathy. This is the secret of the Passion's pathos, that Christ opened not His mouth, or if He spake at all it was but to pray for His tormentors, to sympathize with Mary and John, or to beg for a little

water. Dives, we read, Dives buried in hell, was denied one drop wherewith to allay his thirst, but human cruelty was crueler still, for not content with refusing Christ's request, they gave Him instead vinegar and gall. Christ died, the Gospel says, crying out with a loud voice. It was the cry of a broken heart to humanity to come and see if there ever was or could be, even in hell, woe like unto His woe.

"He humbled Himself even unto the death of the cross; wherefore God exalted Him." Brethren, after the cross the crown, or rather the cross itself became for Christ and the world their joy and crown. In the spiritual world he that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. The proud and boastful Pharisee returned home from his devotions in the Temple less justified than the humbly penitent publican. The rich young man who refused to give up all and follow Christ was never heard of more in history, sacred or profane, but because the Apostles left their little all and followed Christ, their fame hath gone to the ends of the earth, and because Mary, by vow of chastity, forfeited, humanly speaking, all claim to be the Mother of the Messias, therefore did God regard the humility of His handmaid and all generations call her blessed. The sequence between self-humiliation and exaltation Christ thus expressed: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Christ uttered these words in the midst of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and whenever He gave His Apostles a

glimpse of His divinity and of the glories to come, He never failed also to remind them of His approaching persecution and ignominious death. Unless one forgets self, unless he hates and dies to self, he can never accomplish anything great for God or humanity or his own soul. A greater benefactor than Jesus the world has never known, and He, in the accomplishment of His mission, simply annihilated self. He was fond of comparing Himself to the seed—sometimes to the largest, the grain of wheat, and again, to the smallest, the mustard-seed. Christ was at once the greatest and the least, God and man. We see Him at His lowliest in the manger, at the pillar, thorn-crowned or crucified, but He was still the greatest, for He was born of a Virgin, feared and adored by kings, hailed by angel choirs; He made the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the dead to rise again. He was the greatest of all when, at His death, Nature was convulsed and conquered, and when, rising from the tomb, He led captivity captive. But the author of Christianity, as it exists to-day, is Christ not at His greatest but at His lowliest, for His method was to sink His divinity into His humanity, and to lower His humanity into the very earth, that dying there He might bring forth much fruit. It was necessary that He, the new Adam, should sleep the sleep of death on the cross, that out of His side might emerge the new Eve—the Church—the Mother of all the living. We read that Rachel of old gave birth to two sons, the first of whom was born without the pains of childbirth, but the second with such excruciating tortures

that her child had scarcely taken his first breath when she breathed her last. So it was with God the Creator and God the Redeemer. When first He created man it was with joy and exultation, but the product of His hands proved a failure,—man abandoned Him so that God remained still practically alone. "Unless the seed die, itself remaineth alone." But man's regeneration was accomplished by the torments and death of the man-God, and the result was that the dead seed brought forth much fruit. For the Church to-day stands like a mighty tree towering above all earthly things, her branches and members spreading everywhere, clothed with the fair foliage of her rites and ceremonies, adorned with the blossoms of innocence and laden with the fruits of sanctity, and men gaze at her and marvel that so great a plant should have sprung from so small a seed, that that limp figure on the cross should be the author of so mighty and such a perfectly organized institution. Such exaltation has Christ achieved that even the instrument of His torture, the cross, previously the object of dread and horror, has become for mankind a ladder of Jacob leading heavenward, a tree of life in the midst of earth, laden with precious fruit, a rock in an arid desert from which, when struck, gush forth sweet waters, an inexhaustible widow's cruse, affording us our daily bread and the wherewithal to satisfy our heavenly creditor. With the sign of the cross temples and altars are consecrated, ministers ordained, and the sacraments administered. We place it on our spires to point us heavenward, on our fore-

heads to guide us as a lamp through this dark world, and we mark with it the resting-place of our dead. In our battles with the powers of darkness our standard is the one God gave to Constantine, an illumined cross with the words, "In this sign, conquer." Before the crucifix we bow in adoration, and to possess even a particle of the original cross is to be rich indeed. The sign of the cross is the uniform of mercy's army, the countersign at which the world's sentinel cries: "Friend, pass on." Whatever good we do in life begins and ends with the sign of the cross, and dying we press it to our lips. Verily of the cross as of Christ Himself may be quoted the words: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."

Brethren, this truth, that the only way to the crown is the cross, cannot be too strongly emphasized, for our instincts are contrary to the laws of Nature and grace. We recoil from the cross while we clutch the crown. But Nature acts otherwise. The tree does not spring up unless the seed dies. Far otherwise, too, is the service of God. Whoever have done great things for Him have succeeded because they held the goods of this life and life itself at their true value and sacrificed all for the life to come. "If any man will come after Me," says Christ, "let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." The same is true of our efforts in behalf of humanity—our self-sacrifice will be the measure of their success. Why if, in purely secular spheres of human activity, men succeed because they literally put their heart, their

soul, their life unto their task, how much more so, in the work of spreading the kingdom of God! The martyrs because they died and with their blood fertilized the ground, bore increase a hundredfold, for their spirits, released and diffused abroad through their example, spread about a very epidemic of faith and hope and love. By such means, too, must our own salvation be procured, for unless we rise superior to self we shall never accomplish our highest destiny. "He that loveth his life shall lose it," says Christ, "and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal." Our tendency is to load ourselves down with good things of earth, whereas, to wrestle successfully with Satan, we must be as abstemious and as thinly clad as an athlete. It is the heavy load on the rich man's back that makes the way to heaven appear to him so steep and the gate so narrow. The one argument against salvation for the majority is the amount of selfishness in the world, and Christ's threat that whoever loves his life here shall lose it hereafter. For no man, whose efforts in the work of salvation began and ended in himself ever did, or ever can, reach heaven. Faith is all very well, but it is not enough, for Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example to be followed. The true economy of salvation, therefore, is to save ourselves by sacrificing self for the salvation of others. Woe to him who approaches his Judge single-handed and alone. Like the wicked servant who hid his talent in a napkin, his master will order him to be cast into exterior darkness. Our work, whether it be the suppression of

our own passions, or the giving of our substance to relieve the poor, or the bestirring ourselves to lead sinners back to God, or the laying down of our lives for the brethren—whatever it be we must never allow self to stand between us and our duty. But the battle must first be fought and victory gained at home—in and with ourselves. For a Christian to gratify all his cravings would be not less unreasonable than for a fever patient to indulge in copious draughts of cold water with the certainty of fatal consequences. Our natures perturbed by sin require homœopathic treatment—further perturbation by self-denial will restore them to life and health.

"He humbled Himself—and God exalted Him, that every tongue should confess the Lord Jesus." Brethren, besides confessing the greatness of Christ's sufferings and the greatness of His glory we must not forget to acknowledge the malice of our sins for which He suffered. When Joseph's brethren sold him into slavery and to prove his death falsely exhibited to his father a bloodstained garment, Jacob cried out: "A most wicked beast hath devoured Joseph." How much more wicked was that beast of sin which sent back to His Father Christ's earthly garb—His torn and bleeding humanity! Christ was to His Father as a vase of priceless worth, but when filled with our putrid wickedness the Father crushed and ground Him unto dust. Christ was the only begotten and well-beloved Son of the God of armies, but when He donned the rebel uniform of sin His Father caused Him to be tortured and executed.

And if God spared not His beloved Son defiled by the sins of others, will He spare us laden with our own? If the fire of God's vengeance so fiercely devoured Christ, the green wood, will not we, the dry wood, be utterly consumed? If Christ's Passion be the measure of God's hatred of sin, who shall deny that hell exists and is eternal? But here we must acknowledge, too, Christ's boundless goodness for that He saved us from a fearful doom, for by sacrifice of self He restored the earthly paradise and reopened heaven. Wherefore it is that every tongue should confess the Lord Jesus, and every Christian imitate His virtues. While adoring the dead cross of Christ, let us not forget our duty regarding the living crosses of our lives. In sinning our guilt was more than that of merely having looked on sin, and our expiation calls for more than merely looking on Christ crucified. Like St. Paul, we ought to be fixed to the cross with Christ, we ought to live, not we, but Christ in us. We ought, like St. Francis, to bear in our bodies the stigmata, or, like St. Clare, have the cross imprinted on our hearts. Mary and John were dearest of all to Christ because nearest to His cross, and we, if we imitate them, shall be by Him exalted unto the glory of God His Father.

Good Friday.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"O all ye that pass by the way, come and see if there be woe like unto my woe."—Lam. i. 12.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Lenten sequence. II. Close. III. Meditate, compassionate, be comforted.
I. Meditate: 1. Our Brother. 2. Betrayed, denied, scourged, crowned, rejected. 3. The crucifixion.
II. Compassionate: 1. Mother and Brother. 2. Suffered for us. 3. For our sins.
III. Find comfort: 1. Life's trials. 2. Light by contrast. 3. Effect of pity and love.
Per.: Salutary effect of meditation on the Passion.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, we have been trying during this Lent to bring our souls into a closer union with Our Lord and Saviour. With our crosses on our shoulders, we have been trying to faithfully follow Him. To spur ourselves on, we have reflected on the reward of perseverance—the eternal happiness of our immortal soul; we have reflected on the consequences of unfaithfulness—the misery of a sinner's life and sinner's death here, and of a sinner's hell hereafter; and we have reflected on penance and prayer, the means of following Our Lord closely and perseveringly. So, to-night, we find ourselves by His very side, prepared to go with Him through the last sad scene of our tragic Redemption; to assist Him with His cross, as did Simeon of Cyrene; to

stand in speechless anguish with Mary and see Him die on the cross; to kneel with Magdalen and gaze in loving adoration on His dead body reposing in the arms of His poor afflicted Mother.

Our Lord extends a threefold invitation to us to meditate on His Passion. First, He asks us to consider how great were His sufferings, saying: "O all ye that pass by the way, come and see if there be woe like to My woe." Secondly, He invites us to compassionate His sufferings: "Have pity on Me, have pity on Me, at least you My friends." Thirdly, He asks for our love and promises love in return: "O all ye that labor and are burdened, come to Me and I will refresh you, and you shall find peace for your souls." God grant we may so meditate on Christ's Passion as to excite our pity for Him, and then our love, for pity is akin to love.

"O all ye that pass by the way, come and see if there be woe like unto My woe." Who is this who speaks? It is our elder Brother, our Saviour, our God. That Brother of ours, who, though born and reared in poverty, was still nurtured and brought up with all the care and tenderness of His young Mother, between whom and her Son there existed the fourfold love of a mother for her son, of a bride for her spouse, of a daughter for her father, of a saintly virgin for her God. That Brother, who, instead of harsh words and corporal punishments, received from His foster father naught but lowly homage. That Brother, who, up to a few months ago, had never passed from the gentle influence of His own

family, His own village, into the rough world beyond. That Brother, the most beautiful among the sons of men—as fair and as tender as a maiden—pale and slender and strangely sad, but, withal, unspeakably commanding—kind and good to all, but especially the lover and the well-beloved of the little ones. That Brother, whose wondrous charity led Him to cure the demented boy; to take the ruler's little dead daughter in His arms and breathe new life into her; to shed tears with Mary and Martha and console them by raising their dead brother Lazarus to life; to stop the funeral of the widow's son and give back to the poor heartbroken mourner the sole hope and joy of her declining years. O my Jesus! when we think of all your goodness, we are not content with offering you the purest of all love—the love of a brother for a brother—we want to prove our love—we want to suffer that you may not suffer—we want to die that you may live. But no; Our Lord is too generous for that; He would sooner suffer Himself than see us suffer. All He asks of us is to come and see if there be woe like unto His woe. Come and see—and, oh! my poor Brother, what do we see? We see Him in the midst of a vast crowd of soldiers — the most savage and brutal men, probably, God ever created. And why is He here? Why has He left Nazareth? He is here on account of His own goodness and the wickedness of men. For He went around the whole country, with His Apostles, doing good, but men took it ill of Him; they began to envy Him His supernatural power and hate Him

for His very goodness. The more love and kindness He showed them the more they hated Him, until, finally, they decided it was expedient that one man, our innocent Brother, should die for the people. The more they hated Him the more He loved them, for even while they were plotting His death, He was giving His Apostles power to absolve His enemies, and to change bread and wine into His body and blood, to be food and drink for their souls. But they only hated Him all the more—aye, even in that little band of Apostles, from whom, of all men, He might expect gratitude and love, even among these was one who hated Him—Judas; who rushed from the room after a sacrilegious communion to sell and betray his Friend into the hands of His enemies. Oh! no wonder our poor Lord was weary of life, sorrowful, sad even unto death as, at nightfall, He strayed through the silent solitude of the Garden of Gethsemani! No wonder, I say, for after the institution of the Holy Eucharist He seemed to have put away His divinity, to have become our human, mortal Brother in very truth. Hence His poor human nature, finding itself abandoned by the Divinity, stood aghast at the wickedness and ingratitude of men, at the enormity of the sufferings He was about to endure, at the uselessness of these sufferings for millions of mankind; and, in a paroxysm of grief and fear, He turned to His Apostles for comfort, but found none, for they were asleep; and He turned to His Father and begged to be spared these sufferings, but His Father bade Him drink the bitter chalice to the dregs.

Abandoned by God, abandoned by man, He sank down under His weight of woe, with not a sign of life left save the bloody sweat that oozed out at every pore. So long did He lie there that even heaven seemed to doubt of His reviving, for an angel came and recalled Him to life—recalled Him from the agony of death to begin a living agony—to receive the false kiss of Judas, to see His sworn followers desert Him, to be led away, bound, by the rabble, to be flung headlong into the brook Cedron as He passed it, to be dragged wet and bleeding from Annas to Caiphas, and from Caiphas to Pilate, and from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back to the courtyard of Pilate. There we find Him now. Let us push through that jeering, scoffing, brutal crowd and look at Him. My poor Brother! Handcuffed and bruised, His breast heaving with emotion, His breath quick and short, the perspiration dripping from His face, and His eyes wildly searching among those around Him for a friendly face. Suddenly His countenance lights up, for He sees, by the door, the Apostle Peter, come, no doubt, to fulfil his oath, and die with Him. Ah! no, for Peter will not even look at Him; he turns away swearing he never knew Him; and now the drops of sweat that trickle down Our Saviour's face are mixed with scalding tears.

Now that He is alone, entirely alone, the full frenzy of His enemies breaks upon Him. We see them load Him with dishonor; subject His body to every kind of abuse and torture, and finally murder Him before our eyes. They ask Him what He has to say in self-

defence, and no sooner does He open His mouth to reply than a vile miscreant rushes at Him from the crowd, and deals Him a resounding, staggering blow in the face. Shame, not for Himself but for His assailant, sends the hot blood to His sacred face and out through the wound He has received, and He bows down His head, resolved, from that moment, to endure all in silence. But His silent submission only maddens them the more. They blindfold and buffet Him and spit in His face. One by one these brutal men come before Him, bowing low in mock reverence and hailing Him, in tones of assumed homage, as their king; and then return to mingle with the crowd that stands around, and make the courtyard ring again with their laughter at the savage humor of the scene. While this fiendish jest is going on within, outside is heard the mighty roar of the surging mob calling on Pilate to pronounce the death-sentence. But Pilate hesitates; he knows the man is innocent; his wife has dreamed a dream of dire calamity to come should He be condemned; and as he looks down from his balcony into the courtyard, even his heart thrills with pity for the poor forlorn prisoner. "Friends," he cries, "this man is innocent." "No," they answer, "He is guilty and He is an apostate and a traitor, and unless you sentence Him we will denounce you to Cæsar." "But," he insists, "I cannot be responsible for an innocent man's death." "His blood," they cry, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." "Take," he begs, "take the felon Barabbas and hang him but spare the Christ." But they roar back:

"Not Barabbas—let him go free—but let the Christ be crucified." Look at our poor innocent Brother, as He stands there on that balcony before that immense throng—stands handcuffed to a highway robber, a red-handed murderer—stands there in mute appeal to the people for His life. Oh! His heart sickens, and His soul seems to die within Him, and a livid hue spreads over His already pale and ghastly countenance as He hears them cry: "Long live Barabbas; death to the Christ."

The solemn death-sentence has fallen from the judge's lips; the guilty judge washes his hands as though he would, thereby, remove the stain from his conscience—our poor Brother is hurried off to suffer unheard-of sufferings and to die a felon's death. He is hurried down into a cold, dismal dungeon in the midst of which stands a column three feet high with a ring at the top like a hitching-post, and, being stripped of His garments, He is bound thereto in a stooping position, and scourged. One by one each brawny savage grasps the leather thong, with its leaded ends, as it falls from the hand of his exhausted predecessor, and rains blows on the tender back and quivering sides and heaving breast of our poor Saviour. Oh! the horrible echo of those blows, and the panting of the executioner, and the shower of flesh and blood that strewed the ground, and the bones laid bare, and the convulsive writhing of that body, and the mute agony of those streaming eyes and that quivering countenance! Ah! Mary, the soldiers turned you roughly away when you tried to

enter with your Son, but you linger by the door and you try to count the countless blows and your maternal heart sickens at the sounds, and half-fainting you lean against the wall, and your hot tears fall and your loud sobs reveal your unspeakable woe. Ah! that gentle, loving boy that, as an infant, lay smiling in your arms, that played as a child round your knee, that laid His boyish head on your lap and called you Mother; that, only the other day, held you in His arms and kissed you good-bye forever—Ah! look at Him now stripped of His garments, stripped of His skin, stripped of His flesh, with not a friend in all the wide world but yourself—standing in the midst of His barbarous persecutors, looking around, vainly, among them for one look or word of sympathy; sinking down for a moment under His load of mental and bodily torture—into the dense darkness of misery with not a ray of consolation. A moment only, for they soon rouse Him and put on His garments and hurry Him out past His poor Mother, up to the great courtyard again. She cannot follow Him in there, and, even if she could she could never get near Him with the crowd. For the place is filled with soldiers who seat Him on a stone bench and place on His head a platted crown of huge thorns and force them down and in until their sharp points penetrate the skin and grate on the bones of the skull. Oh! the anguish of the Mother's heart as she listens to those sounds! She cannot see Him, but she knows He is in the midst of that throng, silent and forlorn, the blood streaming down into His eyes and mouth, a scarlet fool garment

on His shoulders, a fool's sceptre—a reed—in His hand. She sees the crowd sway hither and thither as the soldiers, in grim sport, struggle to reach Him, to mock Him, as a King whom she knows truly to be the King of kings; to spit on and buffet and load with dishonor Him whom she knows to be the soul of honor; to torture and torment Him who, she knows, was always good and kind to everybody, and feels even for His enemies naught but tenderness and love. Why, even the stony heart of Pilate is moved to pity as he looks on, and he is led to believe and hope that if that howling mob outside could only see the man now, they, too, would be moved to pity Him and let Him go. So once again he orders Him to be dragged up and out upon the balcony, with His hands bound, the crown on His head, the purple robe on His shoulders, the reed in His hand; and thinking to give them the full benefit of the piteous spectacle, Pilate suddenly presents Him to them and shouts out: "Behold the man!" Behold the man! Ah, if you have the smallest vein of sympathy in your nature; if your heart ever beat fast and swelled with pity for a poor fellow creature, for a poor Brother,—behold this man and shed one little tear over His deplorable condition. What more touching sight is there than to behold a strong man writhing in mute agony? There before me stands my poor, gentle, patient Brother; His knees trembling beneath Him with weakness, and every muscle of His mangled body shivering with torture; His head bowed down, and those pathetic eyes searching the crowd with a

wild, imploring look. Oh, there were little children in that crowd whose young hearts, at a look from Him, burst with pity for Him, and sent the scalding tears to blind their eyes to the woeful sight. There were young women there who pitied Him for the sake of their own brothers and lovers. There were mothers there who thought of their own sons and bowed their heads in speechless sorrow when they heard the wail of His poor Mother. Aye, for Mary was there in the throng, and when her eyes met the eyes of her Son she shrieked aloud and sank back into the arms of Mary Magdalen and St. John. But there sympathy ended,—the vast majority of that crowd remained pitiless and cried all the louder: "Let Him be crucified! Let Him be crucified!" Pilate's last feeble attempt to save the innocent has failed, and so he gives Christ over to the mob to do with Him as they will. Eagerly they set to work to carry out their fiendish purpose. Willing hands procure and prepare the rough cross; the huge nails are brought and the heavy hammer, and the mournful procession starts up the hill of Calvary. There are three to be executed, Our Lord and two robbers; two culprits going to satisfy justice, one victim of religious fanaticism. And as the hatred of the religious fanatic is more relentless even than the strictest justice, so the robbers are allowed to walk free, while Our Lord is made to carry His cross. Was there ever a poor shattered frame more incapable of bearing a load! was there ever a heavier load placed on human shoulders! was there ever a steeper

or more uneven road trod by two poor mangled human feet! Poor Mary follows in the crowd, and, as she sees the bloody footprints His feet have made, her maternal heart can contain itself no longer. In a frenzy of despair and with a superhuman effort, she rushes frantic through the crowd. Men fall back in alarm before her fierce earnestness, and on she goes through the parted ranks until she stands face to face with her Son. "Mother," He sobs, "Mother," and at the word all her unnatural courage dies out, all the love and tenderness of her nature come back to her, and in a moment she is a helpless woman, a heart-broken mother again. Speechless with emotion, their eyes meet in one long, last look, and then the rough guard brushes her aside, and the gloomy procession moves on. Oh, how the great heart of that fondest of sons must have ached with sympathy for His poor Mother! What bitter tears He must have shed on that dreary march as He compared the happiness of their life long ago, in the little home of Nazareth, with the misery of their present condition! Aye, I feel as sure as if Christ Himself revealed it to me, that one of the bitterest of all the bitter pains He had to endure, was the thought of His poor Mother's grief and desolation; for His generous heart felt first for His Mother, then for mankind, and last of all for Himself. That is why, when He fell three times under the cross, He suffered more from the thought that His Mother was listening to His groans and the blows He received, than He did from the blows themselves. That is why, also, He honored His Mother

by honoring the whole race of womankind in making them His only comforters; by allowing Veronica to wipe the blood and sweat from His sacred face, and stopping to sympathize with the women of Jerusalem. I say, to sympathize with them, for when they would have consoled Him, He, with a sublime forgetfulness of self, said: "Weep not for Me, but for yourselves and for your children." Aye, and He remembered His fond, dead foster-father, St. Joseph, and though no man in all that throng showed Him a single kindness by word or deed, yet did He honor the male sex by allowing Simon of Cyrene to help Him carry His cross. So He moved on to His death, tenderly solicitous about every one but Himself; thinking of, and in His heart weeping for, you and me, His brothers and sisters, and for our sins. On He goes, more dead than alive, stopping now and then from sheer exhaustion; on and on, up to the top of Calvary, where the three holes are already dug. There He throws down His cross and waits while the vast throng struggle for the best positions from which to view the scene.

The three prisoners are left alone with the executioners and a small guard. The condemned are now stripped—a small matter for the two who had not been scourged, but for Our Lord a renewal of all His agony, an opening up of every wound He bears. Then two rough hangmen seize on each arm, and fling them rudely down upon their crosses and jumping on them with fierce haste, set the enormous nails and ply the ponderous hammers. Oh my poor Lord! my

blood freezes at the sound of those hammers. Let my soul be convulsed with pain as is your body; let my tears flow as freely as does your blood. Oh, look at Him now, hoisted on His cross between earth and heaven—incarnate modesty exposed naked to the sight and vile scoffs and jests of a libidinous throng; swayed unsteadily to and fro as they move the foot of the cross to the pit prepared for it; torn with all anguish as, with a rude jerk, they drop it in. The shock were enough to tear His soul from His body, but still it could not draw a word of complaint from His lips. The crucified thieves fill the air with their cries and one calls loudly on the Christ to use now His boasted power and blast their executioners and save all three. But lo! the thorn-crowned head is raised, and the eyes glance heavenward, and in a trembling voice He cries: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He taught mankind: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that persecute you;" and here He proves He well knows how to practice what He preached. They have hung Him as a criminal, they have put an insulting inscription over His head, they have robbed Him of His last and only possessions, His garments—and after all He prays for them: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Ah, no wonder one thief forgot his torture to admire this sublime charity; no wonder he believed in Our Lord's divinity and received then and there the promise of the reward of faith: "This day thou shalt be with Me in para-

dise." His thirst for souls being thus sated by one sinner saved, He then, and only then, becomes conscious of the bodily thirst that consumes Him. "I thirst," He moans, and two forms spring forward at the word—a soldier who dips a sponge in vinegar and presses it to His lips—and Mary, unable, poor soul, to relieve His thirst unless by her tears or, if need be, with her heart's blood. Ah, how the tender heart of Jesus throbs with pity for His poor Mother Mary! What will become of her when He is gone! Will she go back heartbroken and alone to the deserted home in Nazareth and pine away and die of very grief? Oh for some one to be her comforter, some one to entrust her to! His eyes search the crowd beneath and He sees there the beloved disciple John, and He calls to him: "John, as thou lovest Me be a son to My Mother; Mother, for My sake be a mother to him." Then John takes her by the hand and calls her Mother, and at the tender word she sobs and moans as if her heart would break. And Jesus sobs too,—moans in utter desolation of spirit. He has given up all, even His own beloved Mother! Nailed on His cross, abandoned by all on earth, His humanity cries out to heaven: "My God, My God, have you too abandoned Me?" At that awful sound a hush falls upon the noisy throng, Nature herself seems to hold her breath, the midday sun grows dim, as though night, with a veil of darkness, would fain shut out from mortal eyes the horrible scene. Darkness and silence over all, and the weird horror of the scene is intensified by the wails of Magdalen, the sobs

of Mary, and the dreary moans of the dying Christ. "It is finished," He cries, and soon again through the darkness comes a long, last, loud scream of pain: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." The earth trembles and the storm-cloud bursts, and men fly for their lives, only to run into the arms of the newly risen dead. The thunder booms and the lightning flashes through the darkness, and lights up, with a ghastly glare, the mount and the cross and the white limp figure of the dead Saviour. Nature is convulsed at the death of Nature's God; all men cry out as I cry out here to-night: "Brother, Saviour, God, we have come and we have seen and we own there never was and never can be woe like unto Thy woe."

"Have pity on Me, have pity on Me, at least you, My friends." O Brethren, is there a heart here to-night so stony as to refuse Him that pity which the Saviour begs? He is our Brother and Mary is our Mother. In their blessed company we have spent the happiest days of our lives. He toiled for us little ones with all the great love of an elder Brother. He prepared us the choicest food—His sacred body; and the choicest drink—His precious blood; and kept us clothed constantly in the royal garment of His precious grace. Mary, too, watched over us and cared for us with all the infinite love which only a fond mother's heart can feel. And can we, her younger children, His younger brothers and sisters—can we stand around that cross unmoved, and refuse our dying Brother and our martyred Mother Mary the tenderest pity of our hearts? Especially

when we know that her anguish and His agony are undergone for us; that, of every pang she feels, we are the cause; that every suffering of His soul is the result of our sinful thoughts and desires; every torture of His body the result of the sins we have committed with our five senses. Oh! God help the poor soul that cannot sympathize with its suffering Brother and Lord. God help the poor heart that does not melt with compassion in response to His feeble cry: "Have pity on Me, have pity on Me, at least you, My friends."

Pity will be not only akin to love, but will become love itself if we listen to His third and last invitation: "Oh all ye that labor and are burdened, come to Me and I will refresh you, and you shall find peace for your souls." Who of us can afford to reject that blessed invitation? Who of us does not, at times, find his cross lie heavy upon him and the enemies of his soul persecute and torment him, and his life devoid of all but desolation of spirit and misery of mind and body? Who of us who does not, at times, find the work of salvation hard labor, and the yoke of God a heavy burden? No; in all the world there is not one who does not need frequent spiritual refreshment to bring peace to his soul. This refreshment and this peace he must seek for, in meditating on, and comparing Christ's sufferings with his own. The thought of these sufferings will make his own seem light; he will forget his own trials out of pity for his Saviour. When he remembers that his Saviour suffered all that for him, love will take possession of his

heart; and since the effect of love is to unite the lover with the beloved, he will climb the height of Calvary or approach the second Calvary—the altar, and he will take into his arms, aye, into his breast, that precious body of his brother, and he will touch his lips to the sacred side and taste the saving blood of his Redeemer; and he shall come away, his soul refreshed into new life and the blessed peace of Christ in his heart.

Then, having followed his Lord along the bloody way of His cross in this life, having been united to Him in His awful sufferings and death, he will be eternally united to Him hereafter, to enjoy Christ's unspeakable consolation in the happy kingdom of the blessed.

Easter Sunday.

Christ's Resurrection and Ours.

"*He is risen and goeth before you into Galilee, and there you shall see Him.*"—Mark xvi. 6, 7.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: False and true motives for joy at Easter.
I. Christ's Resurrection: 1. Basic truth. 2. Testimony of Christ. 3. Of Jews and Apostles.
II. Proofs: 1. Many necessary witnesses. 2. Reliable. 3. Constant unto death.
III. Our resurrection: 1. Pledged in Christ's. 2. Laws of Nature and justice. 3. Christ can and will redeem His promise.
Per.: 1. Tragedy and comedy. 2. Infidel, Christian, Catholic. 3. Faith, hope, love.

SERMON.

Brethren, Lent with its sorrows and Easter with its joys and glories have come and gone, and what

impressions have they left? Alas! I fear, we mourned in Lent as children do, not knowing why, but weeping just because the Church, our Mother, wept. Our Easter joy, I fear, is woefully conventional, inspired perhaps by the genial breath of spring, or the consciousness that fasting and sackcloth have given way to feasting and the respectability of brand-new clothes. Easter rejoicings, my Brethren, should be more thoughtful, more rational. They should be founded on the deep-laid truths that lie beneath it all, and on the vast field of possibilities the Resurrection opens up to Christians. "For," says St. Paul, "if Christ be risen from the dead, therefore we also shall rise again; therefore we are true witnesses of God; therefore our preaching is true and our faith divine; therefore the penitent's sins are forgiven; therefore they who have died in the Lord have not perished; therefore we shall all rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Brethren, Christ's Resurrection is the fundamental truth of Christianity. Prove to me that Christ arose not, and in a moment I am an infidel; prove to me that Christ arose, and in that instant I conceive a faith broad enough to accept all the teachings of Christ and Christ's Church; a hope that stops not short of everlasting life for my soul and for my body too, and a charity for God and my fellowman which, God willing, will procure me a happy and a blessed immortality. For if Christ rose again, then beyond all peradventure, He was God, and every word He uttered and every truth taught by the one true

Church wherein He promised to abide forever, must be infallible beyond all doubt. For Christ had said: "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it up again," words, which, if justified by the event, proclaim the speaker to have been a God. Lazarus, and other few before and since, have been recalled to life, but always, mind you, by a power other than their own, but only God, the Arbiter of life and death, could say: "I die at pleasure and at pleasure do I rise again." In fact on this one truth, viz., that He should rise again, Christ staked His reputation as a man and His claim as God upon the world's credence and fidelity. All His other miracles had a distinct purpose immediately in view, whether it was that He pitied the widow of Naim, or had compassion on His famished followers, or rescued them from shipwreck; and invariably He enjoined silence concerning such evidences of His Godhead, until He should be risen from the dead. Nay, when pressed by His enemies for a proof of His divinity, He refused the sign they asked, saying: "No other proof shall be given you but that of Jonas the prophet, who after three days came forth from the whale even as I shall from the tomb, for if you destroy this temple, My body, in three days I shall raise it up again." His position, therefore, was that His Resurrection was to be the crowning proof of His divinity and that without His Resurrection He and all His teaching and wonder-working would have come to naught. Not only Christianity, but all religion from the beginning, would have been dis-

credited had not God's promise to our fallen parents that their seed should conquer sin and death been fulfilled in the person of the risen Saviour. This supreme importance of the Resurrection as an historic fact was recognized by Christ's enemies and friends alike. The Jewish nation's honor was at stake, for if Christ rose again they were forever branded as the murderers of the Messias, but if He failed to rise they could take credit to themselves for having justly punished an impostor; and hence they sought by every means to prove His promise unfulfilled. The Apostles, on the other hand, seem to have preached at first as though the Resurrection was the only dogma of our faith, styling themselves the witnesses thereof and taking care to elect as Judas's successor an eye-witness of the Lord's arising. "For," says St. Paul, "if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain and our faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God and we are yet in our sins, and they who have died in the Lord have perished and we are of all men the most miserable." Whereas, I repeat, and repeat and repeat again, if Christ did rise from the dead we are bound by inexorable logic to admit His divinity, to accept all His teachings and all the teachings of His Church, and to conform our lives thereto—we are bound to fall at the Saviour's feet with St. Thomas, and repeat Thomas's all-embracing profession of faith: "My Lord and my God."

Brethren, what evidence, therefore, have we of the truth of Christ's Resurrection? What evidence! In

all history there is no fact more clearly proven. God's providence, recognizing the tremendous importance of this truth, has employed the hatred of the Jews and the incredulity of the Apostles—the gravest obstacles to belief in it—to be the strongest arguments in its favor. A lawyer with Christianity for his client, engaged to prove Christ's Resurrection against the modern Pharisees and Sadducees, would find the earning of his fee an easy task indeed. For, a fact to which many and necessary witnesses testify; witnesses so obstinate in unbelief that they could not be deceived and so circumstanced that they could not deceive others; witnesses willing to seal their wonderfully unanimous testimony with their blood—a fact like that, I say, must be accepted for certain by every impartial, or even prejudiced, tribunal. Now they that saw the risen Saviour were, first of all, many. To say nothing of the angels in the vacant sepulchre who said to the holy women: "He is arisen; He is not here," or of the guard of soldiers who saw Him rise but held their tongue through bribery, we find in the New Testament, which, whatever else it be, is at least true history—we find therein, I say, explicitly recorded twelve distinct apparitions of the resurrected Saviour, one of which at least five hundred persons witnessed. That many other apparitions went unrecorded St. Luke declares, saying that "Christ showed Himself at frequent intervals for forty days speaking to His followers of the kingdom of God." But why, you ask, did Christ appear exclusively to His friends? Why did He not

confound His enemies by appearing to them too? Brethren, Christ's life-long practice was to hide His glory and reveal His shame. Only three climbed Thabor, but vast throngs lined the slopes of Calvary. And justly so, for the kingdom He came to found was not of earth, nor to be built by means so earthly as to seem to rest on human causes. Besides, it is a law of Nature and of grace that all great changes and reforms result from the efforts of a few. The surging masses cannot be converted instantly, but are as plastic matter which skilful hands must gradually work and mould. Nothing is so fickle as a throng. The eleven, when they saw their Lord, believed and were glad, but many of the five hundred doubted. The multitude had seen His wondrous miracles but with what result? To-day they cry: "Hosanna," to-morrow, "Crucify Him;" and if they had refused to credit Him in life, neither would they have believed Him risen from the dead. Still witnesses, if need be, may be found even among Christ's enemies, for St. Justin, then a Jew, declares the Resurrection was taken by all for granted. It is admitted by the Jewish historian Josephus, and according to Tertullian a circumstantial account of it was written by Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius. Now are our witnesses reliable? Certainly their opportunities for knowing what they testify were most exceptional. Intimately acquainted with Our Lord, they had through forty days repeated chances to establish His identity. It was but natural that at His first appearance they should suspect they saw a spirit, but Christ

dispelled that notion saying: "See by My hands and feet that it is I, Myself; handle and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me to have." St. John tells us the Apostles and disciples "as yet knew not the Scriptures that He must rise again from the dead." They did not expect and could hardly believe His body had arisen, though the fact that His ignominious death had not shaken their faith in Him seems to prove they looked for His return in some spiritual, ghostly shape. But now their error is corrected, for there is Jesus as in life standing in their midst. Some wondrous change has taken place indeed, for lo! He comes and goes, the doors being closed, but still it is the solid human body of the Saviour, wounded in hands and feet and side. And not His body only but His soul, for by eating, conversing and expounding Scripture He shows Himself endowed with vegetative, sentient, and rational existence. And not His body and soul alone, but His divinity, too, as was proved at the sea of Tiberias, where He repeated for the weary fishermen the miraculous draught of fishes. Certainly on the score of knowledge of the event, our witnesses are beyond reproach. But were they over-credulous, perhaps? "Oh foolish and slow of heart to believe" were the words with which Christ Himself upbraided their incredulity. For when the women returned to tell of the empty tomb, of the angels and the folded cloths therein, the Apostles rejected their words as idle tales, nor did they credit even Peter and John, nor Magdalen who came just then from speak-

ing with her Lord. Thomas voiced the secret sentiments of them all when he said: "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." Now would men so set against deception be apt to set about deceiving others? And if so, how was their deceit accomplished? The Saviour's transfixed heart and the official death certificate given to Pilate by the centurion both attest that Jesus really died on Calvary. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus asked for and secured the body, embalmed it and laid it in a tomb hewn out of solid rock and closed by a huge boulder. To make assurance doubly sure, the Jews sealed up the rock and posted a guard of soldiers. Meantime, the Apostles were hiding for fear of the Jews. Did the Roman soldiers betray their lordly masters and league themselves with poor, despised fishermen? Absurd. Did sentinels trained in the iron discipline of Rome sleep on their watch, and if so, how could the sleeping soldiers know the Apostles stole the body? Absurder still. Or did the timid Apostles overcome the armed soldiery, roll back the stone, carefully fold the winding sheet and escape with the dead uninjured? Most absurd of all. No, if Christ arose not, the tomb still held His body—which, too, is false, for the Jews would eagerly have produced it to vindicate themselves and discredit Christianity. Christ, therefore, did arise. The Apostles' and martyrs' blood and the conversion of the world attest it, for men die not to uphold a lie nor is the world

so easily won by fraud. "For if in this life only," says St. Paul, "we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable, but now Christ is risen from the dead the first fruits of them that sleep."

"Christ is risen from the dead the first fruits of them that sleep," but what shall be the aftermath? We, my brethren, our bodies, for if Christ be risen, we also shall rise again. His Resurrection is the pledge of ours and proves it possible and certain. It is a law of spirit and of matter that whatsoever dissolution may take place, no particle of God's creation can be ever lost. Nature's law is universal; naught withers but to rise again, and naught can rise again except it first decay. How easy then it is for God, who made all things from nothing, to reunite the scattered portions of our being! If summer's sun resuscitates the world of plants and trees, can we deny an equal power over our bodies to the Son of God? True, the flowers that bloom this spring are not the same that bloomed a year ago, but were they rational and capable of merit and demerit, God's justice would preserve from year to year their absolute identity. And since fair lilies are often born to bloom unseen while noxious weeds encumber the choicest soil, so there must be a hereafter where justice's scales may find their equilibrium. And this is true of bodies and souls alike, for through joy and sorrow, through happiness and pain, through virtue and through sin, our bodies are the necessary inseparable companions of our souls and both, if God is just, must share alike reward or punishment. To

the saint God says: "Enter into thy rest, thou (the soul), and the arc of thy sanctification (the body)." That was the object of Christ's coming after all, viz., to show us our truest destiny is to be born like Him, to live, to suffer, to do good for others and for God, to die and gloriously rise again. We are to Him what Jacob was to Esau—we cling to His feet emerging from the womb of mother earth. He is the anointed dove sent forth by God, as pigeon fanciers do, to lead back to the dovecote His wayward companions with the odor of His ointments. He is the head and we the members of His mystic body and certainly the head and members will not remain forever disunited. Indeed, if we are destined not to rise again, the whole reason of Christ's birth and death and Resurrection disappears, so that St. Paul justly argues that if the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen. But since Christ rose, as we have proved, our failure to arise will be because Christ either cannot or will not raise us up. That He can is evident, for He performed the vastly greater miracle of raising up Himself. To lift another from earth is hardly wonderful, to lift oneself aloft without support is marvellous. Or will we say, perhaps, that Adam's power to drag us down to death was greater than Christ's to restore our immortality? No, Christ can resuscitate us and He will. "Father," He says, "I will that where I am they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me, that they may see My glory." He bids us follow Him, indeed, but not merely to the cross on Calvary, but beyond it into

His glory. The Scriptures teem with promises of a general Resurrection. Hear God proclaim Himself to Moses the God of the living and the dead; read Ezechiel's vision of the dried bones resuscitated; listen to the Saviour's promise to His beloved Mary and Martha concerning Lazarus; see Nature herself assert this truth in the care the world has everywhere and always taken of the bodies of its dead—read these and see and be convinced and voice your faith in Job's own words: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and I shall be clothed again with my skin and in my flesh I shall see my God."

Brethren, the poet says that all the world's a stage, and all men and women merely players. There are two kinds of plays, the tragedy that ends in death and sorrow, and the one that ends in joy and happiness. Which will our life be when the curtain rises on the final act? "Ah, we shall all indeed rise again," says St. John, "but they that have done good things shall come forth unto resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." Brother, to-day is one scene in life's play; make the most of it, I beg of you. If you are an infidel (for they do stray into Church occasionally)—if you are an infidel, begin the study of scriptural religion with the Resurrection of Christ, and if you have a fairly balanced mind and a will honestly desirous of following God's leadings, I defy you to refrain from embracing Christianity. And if you are a Christian and in doubt which Church is Christ's, make an hon-

est study of Christian history and I defy you to mistake the road to Catholicity. And if you are already Catholic—well, there is much left yet for you to do. Strengthen your faith with the assurance that Christ's rising proved Him God, and that therefore neither He nor the infallible Church He founded can deceive or be deceived concerning the way to paradise. Rekindle your love for God who so mercifully redeemed you; renew your zeal for the spiritual and temporal welfare of your neighbor whom God wishes to share in that redemption. And finally let your faith and charity be ever inspired by your hope—hope in a happy immortality for soul and body; where we shall be forever reunited with father and mother, brothers and sisters; where the mother shall find her little ones, and the lover the love he lost; where the priest shall be united with the souls he helped to save; where God will wipe away all tears from our eyes, and death shall be no more; where faith is blended into vision, and hope into possession, and where naught remains but happiness and love forever and forever. Amen.

Low Sunday.

RATIONALISM.

"Jesus said to him: Be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered: My Lord and my God."—John xx. 27, 28.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Salutary doubt. II. Rationalism. III. Based on pride.
I. Truth: 1. According to rationalists. 2. According to Catholics. 3. Three stages.
II. Unreasonable: 1. Truth infinite. 2. Revelation possible and a fact. 3. Necessary.
III. Even natural truths: 1. Difficult. 2. Danger of error. 3. Romans.
Per.: Practice of 1. Catholics. 2. Rationalists. 3. Inconsistency.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, the Apostle, Thomas, was the first sceptic or rationalist of Christian times. "Oh, happy doubt," exclaimed St. Gregory, "which removed all doubt and placed the fact of Our Lord's Resurrection beyond dispute." Would that one might say as much for later-day rationalism, whose effect invariably is indifference and infidelity. The doubting Thomas is one of the strongest pillars of the Christian Church; the modern rationalist is religion's most dangerous enemy. The rationalist in his pride of intellect rejects and ridicules the supernatural, while Thomas uses Nature to lift him up to God, saying: "Lord, I believe; Lord, help with evidence my unbelief." As Judas by despair was lost and Peter saved by penance, so the modern rationalist's ruin is his

pride, and Thomas's salvation his humility, whereby he falls, not faithless but believing, at the Saviour's feet and cries: "My Lord and my God."

Brethren, strictly speaking, rationalists are those who deny the existence of revealable or revealed truths. But more widely and just as truly the name may be applied to all those who, while admitting revelation, reject from the word of God whatever, in their private judgment, is inconsistent with human reason. Thus, not only downright unbelievers, but all Protestants and in general all non-Catholics are rationalists. They deify reason, claiming there is no truth necessary for man to know which reason will not teach him, so that they take natural rather than supernatural science as their way to the truth and life everlasting. Catholics on the other hand hold that since God is truth, truth, like God, must be infinite; and it is only by following the truth that a soul can come to God. Now, on its way to truth and God, the soul passes through three stages, the state of nature, of grace, and of glory; through three antechambers before arriving at the Holy of holies. Now, each of these states has truths proper to itself, and the darkness which hides these truths from view is dense in the first state, denser in the second, and densest in the third. But God does not leave the soul in darkness. He gives her a light for her guidance proportioned to the darkness to be dispelled. In the first, the state of nature, He gives the light of reason to know natural truths; in the second, He gives her the still stronger light of grace to know supernatural

truths and natural truths impervious to reason; and in the third, as St. John says, "The glory of God enlighteneth it and the Lamb is the lamp thereof." It is, therefore, only a few of the more natural and plainer truths that man can know by the feeble light of reason. With reason alone we can light only the tiny vestibule of the temple of truth, while the vast edifice beyond is shrouded in darkness. Hence, besides reason, we Catholics claim the necessity of another light, the light of the grace of faith in the revelations of God handed down to us in Holy Writ and the traditions of holy Church. Thus, we receive the Bible because it is the word of God, and we admit the truths taught us by the Church because Christ commissioned her to teach all nations all truth for all time under His infallible guidance, and whether we understand them or not we still accept them with childlike faith, remembering Our Lord's words: "He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

Brethren, such is the doctrine of the rationalist, such the Catholic doctrine. Now, I propose to show you that rationalism is irrational, unreasonable. Does our rationalist deny the existence of truths too deep for his reason to fathom? He cannot but admit it. He knows that God exists, that He is a being of infinite intelligence, and that the knowing power of every intellect has a proportionate knowableness in its proper object. The truth of God, then, is infinite. But our little rationalist knows all truth. His mind, therefore, is infinite and equal to God's, for other-

wise he could no more know infinite truth than he could hold the ocean in the hollow of his hand. Or, if he modestly disclaims mental infinity but still maintains his power of knowing all truth, then he denies the infinity of truth and of God's intellect, and with it the very existence of God. To hold that truth is finite, therefore, is to hold that man is as infinite as God, or God as finite as man, which, in either case, is to deny that God exists at all. In the presence of such a conclusion, the rationalist will, I think, readily admit that in the infinite realm of truths there are, at least, some few his reason does not and never can know. This fact is all the more apparent, since there are hundreds of natural truths under our very eyes which we cannot explain. Who knows the nature of electricity? All the scientists who ever lived cannot trace to its source the power whereby I move my finger. Why, Aristotle, the light of Pagandom and the greatest mind the world has ever seen, declared that his reason in the presence of the all-true was as the eye of an owl directed at the midday sun.

Well, yes, hidden truths do exist, says our rationalist, but they could never be revealed. Why not, pray? Is it because God cannot reveal the truths of His mind? Man, if he have knowledge, can impart it to others. Cannot God do as much—He that came into the world to give testimony of the truth? Of what truth? Not of truths already known, certainly, but of hidden truths. To whom? To man, of course, and hence man must have been capable of receiving the truths revealed. He might not have

been able to understand those truths, but he was able to realize their existence, their importance, and their consequences. For, remember that whereas we weigh human testimony by the consistency of the facts, we judge divine testimony by the authority of the witness, and the witness of whom I speak was infallible. So, it was possible for God to reveal those truths and for man to receive them. But did such revelation in fact take place? Beyond the shadow of a doubt, as every leaf of the Bible attests. It is vouched for in the inspired books of the Old Testament, which are the history of man and his intercourse with God from the beginning down to the Augustan Era. In three ways has God at times made known hidden truths to man: first, through his senses, as when angels in human form appeared to and conversed with Abraham, Jacob, and Gedeon; second, through his imagination, as when Pharao in the kine and ears of corn, seven fat and fair and seven lean and blighted, foresaw the seven years of plenty and of famine, or when Nabuchodonosor in his vision of the statue learned the ultimate triumph of the Church; and third, through his intellect, as in the case of Moses to whom God spoke (Num. xii.) not in vision or dream, but mouth to mouth. This last was that third heaven to which St. Paul was caught up in ecstasy. Christ had communicated with him through his senses on the road to Damascus; through his imagination amid the horrors of the shipwreck; and finally through his intellect when, whether in the body or out of the body, he knew not,

he was caught up into paradise and heard secret words which it is not granted man to utter. Paul had sat, indeed, at the feet of Gamaliel, but what was that to the depths of the infused knowledge of God? Again, the fact of revelation is attested by the comparatively recent writers of the New Testament, by the Fathers of the Church, and even by Pagan authors. It is because the Scriptures are the revealed word of God that we find in them the frequent recurrence of such expressions as: "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:" or: "The word of the Lord came to me, saying:" or: "The revelation of Jesus Christ to His servant John," etc. St. Paul (Gal. i. 11) asserts the fact of revelation, saying emphatically: "I give you to understand, Brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man, for neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it; but by the revelation of God," and St. Peter indicates in a few words the primary author of all the books of both Testaments, saying: "Prophecy came not by the will of man at any time; but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost." On the other hand, the greatest geniuses of Pagan times, Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Cicero, etc., after long years of study and research succeeded only in involving themselves in inextricable doubts and difficulties concerning such fundamental verities as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul; so that the phenomenon of a Christian world in peaceful possession of these first principles of truth and morality, together with all they imply and entail,

can be explained only on the hypothesis of a divine revelation having been made. Yet the nineteenth-century rationalist will deny the Bible to be the word of God; will deny that tradition holds revealed truth; will stand up before all the sublime geniuses that from the beginning have bowed their reason before revelation and tell them they were either fools or hypocrites! That is rationalism. Is it rational—is it reasonable?

But not only was the revelation of these truths possible; it was necessary also. For the truths of which we speak are vital truths, appertaining to the dearest interests of mankind—so that, ignorant of them, man could never hope to properly know, love and serve God here or be happy with Him hereafter. For these truths concern the existence and the natures of God and of man, their respective rights and obligations—God's dominion over man and man's duties to God, his neighbor, and himself. Now, many of these truths are entirely above and beyond reason, because they are entirely above and beyond Nature, to the study of which reason is confined. For how could reason find out that God is a spirit to be adored in spirit and in truth? How prove He is, at once, one and three? That the temporal Christ was the eternal God—that mortal man has an immortal soul—that bread, seemingly, is the living body of Christ—that an external sign is the source of inward grace? And yet rationalism holds that reason, though blind to all these necessary truths, is still self-sufficient. Is it rational—is it reasonable?

"But," says our rationalist, "reason could master, at least, some of these truths, such as the existence of God, the necessity of divine worship, the fact of an hereafter," etc. Still, we say, it was necessary for God to reveal even these, else see what would happen. Every child on attaining the use of reason would be bound, under pain of mortal sin, to begin the independent study of these extremely difficult truths; and whether mentally qualified or not, whether his parents could afford the expense or not, he would be obliged to study and study for years and years until he had thoroughly mastered them. Is such a life consistent with youthful levity? Where would be the time for secular education? Would not God be a tyrant to command such impossibilities? Again, even supposing all could afford to spend the best years of their lives in acquiring the knowledge of God and of natural religion, with what certainty would they cling to the knowledge acquired; with what zeal reduce it to practice? If reason errs, as it does, in simple matters, how much more liable is it to err in these loftier truths! And because these truths are hard, therefore, does reason sometimes lead me to one conclusion and my neighbor to another directly opposite. Now I am bound to accept the conclusions of reason—but which, my own or my neighbor's? Here, then, we would be, after all our years of study, as much in darkness and doubt as at the beginning. Nor is this all mere fiction—it is fact. Take, for example, the Roman Empire of long ago. The Romans had no revelation, and see where reason

led them. They had as many gods as they had vices, while the virtues were as little known as was the unknown God. Their gods were criminals, worshipped with crime—Venus, with adultery; Apollo, with theft; and Jupiter, with the sacrifice of human victims. Mothers inhumanly slaughtered their babes. Among the young, murder and rape were daily occurrences. Wives were but slavish prostitutes, and the very best of the men were so bad, that, did they live to-day, they would be considered fit subjects for the gallows. These are some of the conclusions of rationalism. Are they rational—are they reasonable?

Brethren, we are all pilgrims in the desert of life, journeying onward to eternity; and revelation is to us a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, guiding us to the promised land. It is the star leading us to the Christ. Hence, we believe every truth of the Bible, every truth Christ taught, every truth taught by His Church—not because we understand them, but because we know they are the teachings of a God who can neither deceive nor be deceived. And when in doubt about any vital truth, ill-content with the judgment of fallible reason, we seek the decision of our infallible Church. Nor is this an insult to our reason. For to admit an ever so incomprehensible truth on the word of an infallible witness is itself an act of reason—to deny it would be unreasonable. The light of reason is perfected by the light of faith as is the candle by the electric light—and faith is perfected by glory as is the electric light

by the noonday sun. Rationalists and Protestants, on the other hand, rejecting, or subjecting revelation to reason, are like a mariner on the high seas who should throw overboard his only reliable compass. Ah! no wonder that in dogmas they have woefully gone astray! No wonder that in morals they are daily coming nearer the ancient Greeks and Romans! Why, they have not even the merit of consistency. They pay to reason an unreasonable worship. They are rationalists and Protestants by ancestral prejudice. While clinging to the doctrine of private interpretation, they flood the world with scriptural tracts. Brethren, in the presence of revealed truth be ever ready to exclaim: "Yea, I believe; Lord, help my unbelief." Imitate not the doubting but the believing Thomas, and confess your Lord and your God, knowing that blessed is he that hath not seen and hath believed. Thus you may hope to see God by the light of reason and faith here, and by the light of glory hereafter. "For he that believeth shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

Second Sunday After Easter.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SALVATION.

"Other sheep I have that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."—John x. 16.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Doctrines: I. Truth. II. Meaning. III. Consequences.
I. Its truth: 1. Truth one. 2. Church one. 3. Figures of Church.
II. Its meaning: 1. Salvation for all. 2. Body and soul of Church. 3. Live members and dead.
III. Catholic's advantage: 1. Apostasy. 2. Repentance. 3. Mysteries.
Per.: 1. Bigotry. 2. Our responsibility. 3. Our attitude toward others.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, in Catholic theology we find the sentence: "Outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation." First, we will assure ourselves that this sentence is strictly true. Second, we will try to understand well its real meaning. Third, we will resolve to practice always that true Catholicity that stands midway between fanatical bigotry and religious indifference.

Outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation—that is strictly and literally true. For truth is one and it is only by professing the truth that man can be saved. Now if I profess the Catholic religion, and my brother denies it, one of us must be right and the other wrong, or both must be wrong; but both cannot be right, for truth does not contradict itself.

Hence, it follows that if my Church, the Catholic Church, is the one true Church, I, professing her doctrines and living up to them, will be saved, and my brother denying her doctrines in his teaching and practice will be lost. And because truth is one, so must the true Church be one and one only. For, as there is but one God and one Christ, so can there be but one true Church, one true faith, one true Baptism. For the true Church is Christ's living representative on earth, and hence, she is one even as He is one. He called her His *Church*, He founded her on one rock, He gathered His disciples into her as into one fold, under one Shepherd, and His last prayer for her was that she might ever continue one even as the Father and He are one. Christ clothed her with His own personality, giving to her all power in heaven and on earth even as the Father gave to Him.

Hence, just as the apostolic delegate can say: "I am the Pope," so the true Church can stand up before the world and say: "I am Christ." For, sending her into the world He said: "Go preach the gospel to every creature, and whosoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved, but whosoever shall not believe shall be condemned. Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrha than for whosoever shall not receive or hear you. Let such an one be to you as a heathen and a publican. For who denies you, denies Me, and who denies Me before men I will deny him before My Father in heaven." Thus, you see, that so close is the connection between the Father and

Christ and the true Church, that whosoever lives outside the Catholic Church, denies the true Church, denies Christ, denies the Father; whosoever is an enemy to the Catholic Church, is an enemy to his Redeemer and Creator, and will receive the reward of God's enemies—eternal damnation. That is why the Catholic Church is so essentially intolerant, that her very intolerance is the strongest proof of her divinity. That is why, too, no sect claiming to be the true church ever admitted salvation for its separated brethren; or if perchance it did, its indifferentism soon proved its own refutation and its ruin. But the Catholic Church has ever held that outside of her pale there is no salvation; that she is the house of Rahab, wherein alone the inhabitants of the tottering universe may find shelter; that she is the ark of the New Covenant wherein alone men may ride safely over the deluge of sin and error, on through life to eternity.

Outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation. That is true, but I pray, understand it well. What does it mean? Does it mean that every Catholic, howsoever bad, will be saved? No. That the great and good men who mistook error for truth and were willing, or actually did, lay down their lives for their error, that they are all lost? No. That the negro in darkest Africa, the simple celestial of China, or the poor Indian here before Columbus, who never heard of God or Christ or Christ's Church, that they are all lost? No. But, you say, they were not Catholics. Still, I say, they may have been. Let me explain.

God creates all men to be saved, and if they are lost, they are, God permitting, lost through their own fault. Christ died for all without exception. Therefore, I say, there is not a single condition of life in which a man, if he wishes, cannot save his soul. It is possible for the Indian, Chinaman, negro; for the infidel, the heretic, and the Protestant. Therefore, you say, outside the Catholic Church there *is* salvation. No, for if these poor creatures who know not, or are mistaken about, God and His true Church, so live as to deserve heaven, they are really members of the Catholic Church. Again, let me explain. The Catholic Church is a society, and, hence, is a moral person. Now every person has a visible body and an invisible soul, and so, too, has the Church. Her body is made up of the Pope, her head; the bishops and priests, the tongue and hands with which she preaches and ministers; and the great throng that profess Catholicity, partake of her sacraments and are governed by her ministers, are her other members. Now, these members are of two kinds—either live members or dead members. Strictly speaking, live members are Catholics who practise their religion, and are in a state of grace. They belong to the Church's body, and are vivified by her soul, and if they live and die such, they will be saved. Dead members are bad Catholics, paralyzed by sin, hanging on limply to the body of the Church, but not receiving the vivifying influence of its soul—and if they live so and die so, they will surely be lost. Others there are, who belong only to the invisible soul of the

Church—and for that it is only necessary that one be baptized—either by baptism of water, desire or blood—and that he be in a state of grace. It matters not whether he be Protestant or infidel—Indian, Chinaman, or negro—it matters not how ignorant or savage he may be—so long as he lives up to the lights God has given, and desires to do and does all that he knows or considers necessary to secure happiness in the next life—he belongs to the soul of the Catholic Church and as such he will be saved. Hence, the good Protestant who thinks his church the true church and lives as well as he can according to her doctrine; the Pagan, groping eagerly in the darkness of error for the light of God's truth, and willing to follow it, when found, whithersoever it may lead; aye, and the poor Indian, laying him down to die in the woods and lifting up his mind and heart in one last appeal to the Great White Father to have pity on him and bring him into the happy hunting-grounds—each and all of these belong to the soul of the Catholic Church and as such are saved. Comparatively few, therefore, are so outside the Catholic Church as to be without hope of salvation. They are, first, unbaptized infants; second, persons who know the Catholic to be the true Church but neglect or refuse to join her; third, all persons whatsoever, who live and die in mortal sin. To them and them only, applies in full force the saying, that outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation.

But, you say, if every good man belongs to the soul of the Catholic Church and, as such, stands a

chance of salvation, what advantage is it to me to belong to her body also? This advantage, that God having given you the light to know her for the true Church, you would by abandoning her commit a mortal sin and place your salvation in jeopardy. For he who belongs to her soul alone, should God at any time give him the light to know her as the true Church, is bound from that moment to join the visible body of the Catholic Church under pain of mortal sin. And if God does not give him this light, see what straits he is in. To be saved, one must at least belong to the soul of the Church. You are separated from it by sin, but regain your place in God's Church by the sacraments of reconciliation and love. Our good Protestant sins, and his only means of reuniting himself to the Church's soul is an act of perfect contrition. Now what Protestant can live long without a mortal sin? or easily make an act of contrition? or consequently easily save his soul? That is why I suspect that at the last day the vast majority of the elect will be from among professed Catholics, for the election of men from the world into the soul and body of the Church, is a harbinger of their final election from the Church militant into the Church triumphant. Nor must you imagine it is, therefore, better to leave a Protestant in his error than show him the truth and have him refuse it. Apart from the fact that you know not what he will do until you have instructed him, Christ bids us preach the truth to every creature without exception. Why then, you ask, does God give the light of

the truth to some and keep others ever in the darkness of error? Alas! as well might you ask one why God chose you and me out of the myriads of human possibilities—why He creates one man unto election and another unto perdition. For these are mysteries beyond human ken, in the presence of which we can only exclaim with St. Paul: "O the depths of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God; how incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable are His ways!"

This doctrine, my Brethren, is calculated to remove presumptuous bigotry on the one hand, and indifferentism on the other. We accuse Protestants of being bigoted, but in nine cases out of ten, theirs is only a reflection of our own unchristian intolerance. I have, for instance, a young Protestant friend—the soul of honor, and for all I know, virtuous to a degree. Will I cast him off as doomed to perdition? God forbid! For though I belong to the body of the Church I may be dead to its soul by sin, while he, being a member of its soul, stands a better chance of salvation than I. And when I hear of a Protestant being dead, will I say: Alas! another soul gone to hell? God forbid! For never a soul but one left this world for whom I cannot pray; so let me say, rather, Lord have mercy on his soul. Or when I see Protestants flocking into their churches, am I to scoff and hoot? God forbid! For there are many there that worship God with sincere and pure hearts and so work out their salvation. To whom much is given, of him much will be expected. If we, having received the truth, and

all its accompanying blessings, profit not by it, our guilt will be all the greater. Hence, I venture to say, that a good Protestant is more acceptable in the sight of God than a bad Catholic, for it were better for a man never to have known the truth than, after he hath known it, to turn away from the holy commandment that was delivered to him. Does it not redound to our shame and the glory of Protestants that we, with all the graces and helps the true Church affords, are still so little better than they? Brethren, the fact that we have been called into Christ's true Church, places on us a fearful responsibility of clinging more closely to her; of using the means of salvation she holds out to us; and of thus working out our salvation which Christ has made so easy. As for those who have not been so called—well, we must have for them a forbearance and a love as broad as the mercy and charity of God Himself. Remember always, that though they belong not to the limited and visible body of the Church, they may belong to her world-wide and invisible soul; remember that of them Christ has said that: "Many shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down in the kingdom of God, but many of the children of the kingdom shall be cast out." Finally as for those that are outside both the soul and body of the Church, let us beg the holy Spirit of God to enlighten them to know the truth and to strengthen them to conform their lives thereto, so that there may be but one fold and one Shepherd.

Third Sunday After Easter.

SOCIALISM.

"Be ye subject to every human creature for God's sake."
—I. Pet. ii. 13.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Joseph and Jesus. II. Coming conflict. III. Abomination of desolation.
I. Dangers: 1. Infidelity and credulity. 2. Golden mean. 3. Infidel, socialist.
II. Socialism: 1. Its speciousness. 2. Private property. 3. Labor leaders.
III. For poor: 1. Extreme necessity. 2. Eminent domain. 3. Occult compensation.
Per.: 1. Alms-giving. 2. Christian nobility. 3. Time and eternity.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, what a lesson for strikers and socialists is Jesus, the carpenter's apprentice! What a model for masters is the gentle Joseph! What a proof is each of the power of faith! What a commentary on the evils of infidelity! The abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, were the Pagan unbelievers, whose entry into the Jewish Temple was to be the signal for the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish nation. Brethren, he that heareth, let him understand. In our own nation, to-day, there is abroad a feeling of anxiety concerning the stability of popular government—the permanency of republican institutions. Men—leaders and followers alike—instinctively feel there is imminent a conflict between the two great forces of capital and labor, and discuss the abomination that is to precipitate

this conflict and desolate the country. Some say it is ignorance, and advocate compulsory education; others say it is pauperism, and advocate restricted immigration; and others, still, say it is Romanism, and clamor for the expulsion of the Jesuits. But no! the abomination of desolation is the same to-day as ever—the spirit of irreligion itself.

Brethren, we have considered elsewhere a few of the many evil consequences that ensue from a lack of faith in the truths of our holy religion—that ensue from the spirit of infidelity. There are three kinds of infidels; those who deny all truth and all reality in things, those who admit only natural truths to the utter exclusion of the supernatural, and those who, while professing to believe, live as though they did not believe. All these systems of irreligion are equally repugnant to right reason and equally odious in the sight of God. Again, on the other hand, are to be considered the evils that may, and undoubtedly do, spring from a spirit of too much faith—a spirit of excessive credulity—which in the name of religion is ever ready to grasp every and all ridiculous beliefs and superstitious practices. Men thus lay themselves and their religion open to the ridicule of the unbelieving world. The infidel sins by turning religion away from his door; and the too fervent Catholic often sins by taking religion in and arraying her fair form in the habiliments of a clown. Hence, our Catholicity must be a reasonable Catholicity—not unbelieving, but ever ready to receive with childlike faith the truths that God and God's Church propose;

and not too credulous, but determined in all other matters to make a judicious use of our reason. Still, of the two, the spirit of unbelief is much the more dangerous, and its effects on the world have been much more disastrous. For when a man has thoroughly succeeded in forgetting or disbelieving that there is a God in heaven, that he has a soul to save, and that there is on earth a religion and a Church to help him to save it,—very soon the voice of conscience dies within him and from that moment that man is ripe for mischief, a dangerous member of society. And when he looks around the world and sees the poverty and misery of the masses, and the riches and happiness of the favored few—when he sees the incessant toil of the wage-earner, and the equally incessant leisure of the aristocrat; when he sees the power wielded by the ruling classes, and the abject submission of those that they rule—the natural man rises up in rebellion and with no supernatural restraint he clamors for reform. Of these, some clamor for the abolition of civil government, and others demand the destruction of the rich, and others, again, claim that private property is a crime and urge that all wealth be confiscated and equally distributed among all. These are the men whom we call variously Anarchists or Communists or Socialists.

Brethren, there is, at first sight, something certainly very specious and seductive about the arguments of a Socialist. For when we consider that the earth and the fulness thereof is the Lord's, created by God for man—not for this or that man but for all

men; and then when we look around and see how unequal and how seemingly unjust is the distribution of this world's power and wealth among mankind, truly we feel a weakness for the doctrine of liberty and equality. We feel like preaching, ourselves, the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God, and we wonder, not that Socialists are so many, but that they are so few. Again, when we go on further to consider that between the starving pauper and the millions of the rich man stand the Church and State—the State with fetters in one hand and a drawn sword in the other, and the Church pointing to the symbol of Redemption and warning him: "Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not even covet thy neighbor's goods;" why, no wonder the poor man, thus seemingly abandoned by God and Church and State, gets desperate and rebels; no wonder the French Commune has bathed France in the blood of the rich; no wonder the Anarchists have slaughtered the officers of the law in the streets of Chicago. No wonder, indeed, for just as when Adam and Eve rebelled against God the lower order of creation rebelled against them, so when the rich forget their duties to God and their neighbor, the poor very soon learn to forget their duties to the rich. Now it is the Church, and the Church alone, that can ever hope to effectually take her stand midway between the rich and the poor and bring about a peaceful settlement of their difficulties. This she is doing to-day; from that consummate statesman—the Holy Father—down to the lowliest assistant in the land—they are

all throwing the weight of their influence against Anarchy and Socialism on the one hand, and against high-handed oppression and monopoly on the other.

First, then, she teaches that the distinction between rich and poor, between toil and leisure, between the governing and the governed, is inevitable —is a God-given dispensation. For, just as the potter fashions his clay into vessels—some for elegant purposes and others for humbler uses—just as the builder chooses some stones for the foundation and others for the higher parts of the building, so God creates men—some for a nobler, some for a less noble destiny. In building up the social structure He, in His wisdom, places some in a higher, and others in a more lowly position. Thus it is that the power of God, as the Bible says, reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly. Hence, private possessions, if honestly acquired, far from being robbery and crime, are strictly in accordance with the general design of the Creator. I say, if honestly gained, for every man has a right to the fruits of his own honest industry. In the Gospel parable, he who traded with his five talents and gained five more, and he who traded his two talents and gained other two—both receive from their Lord this commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant," while he who buried his talent, and so gained nothing, is styled a wicked and slothful servant. No man ever did or ever will get rich or powerful without an effort—which effort gives him a perfect right to enjoy in peace the fruits thereof.

And because a man is poor it does not follow that he has been a sluggard or a spendthrift. True it is that in the majority of cases our poverty and lowliness are due to ourselves, but still, very often men are poor simply because they are unfortunate. Now, fortune is nothing more or less than the inscrutable providence of God assigning a place to every one, and every one to his own place. Hence, the true Christian's duty is, first, to better his condition if he can by honest industry, and if he fail, to turn to God and say: "Father, Thy will be done." Herein exactly is the mistake of Anarchists and Socialists. With no Christian principles for their guidance, they decry all wealth while madly trying to gain wealth; they covet a rich reward, but are unwilling to endure the preliminary labor. What a farce it is to see, as we often see, that the leaders of strikes and other violent social movements are irresponsible men with not a cent at stake—who have nothing to lose and everything to gain, and who do gain, if not by winning the strike, at least by preying on the pocket of the simple-minded workingman! Those fellows, whose only work is to preach the doctrine of murder and robbery, are not workingmen nor the friends of the workingmen—but criminals guilty of treason, and should be dealt with accordingly. If a nation were to listen to them and follow where they lead, it would soon find itself convulsed with internal dissensions; a slave to that worst of tyrannies, the tyranny of a mob, with no law and no order—with no leisure class with the abilities and the means to advance in the civilizing

arts and sciences—with no man sure of his possessions, even for a day and, therefore, all grown careless in the industrial pursuits—with the very would-be reformers themselves turned into the most merciless oppressors of the poor—in a word, it would find itself surrounded by all the horrors and all the unspeakable miseries of the French Commune.

Now, while the Church thus exhorts the poor to bear their miseries with Christian patience and fortitude, she does not forget to remind the rich of their duties in relieving those miseries. First, she teaches that there may arise circumstances under which one may take and use the property of another without breaking the seventh commandment. Suppose one of those unfortunates whom we call tramps—but who, poor fellows, very often deserve a better name—suppose one of them should find himself an outcast, friendless and alone, dying of hunger with no hope of relief. If that man can only drag himself to the nearest bakeshop, he is allowed to take as much as will relieve his present necessity, and if the owner objects he commits a sin. Oh, but, you say, the vagrant steals what he takes! No, for theft is the taking of what belongs to another against his knowledge and reasonable consent. Now, I say, it is unreasonable to deny a man dying of hunger the morsel he craves, and so if the outcast takes it he commits no theft, but the baker, if he prevents him, is guilty of sin. Again, suppose the city or the whole country to be visited by a famine, and imagine that a dozen men or so have plenty of provisions stored up for a

long time to come; if they refuse to share with the starving hundreds around them, the government, general or local, as the case may be, has a perfect right to seize on their property and distribute it around among the suffering poor. Here again there is no sin nor theft, for material goods are not to be compared to human lives, and if these rich men refuse to save human lives with their goods, their refusal is wicked, unreasonable, and not to be respected. But remember it is only in cases of extreme necessity that the words *mine* and *thine* cease to exist—that what is yours becomes mine and mine yours; and then only to the extent of relieving that necessity here and now. Again, suppose I agreed to do a certain amount of work for a man for so much a day, and suppose that by and by my employer doubled my work without increasing my pay. I protest and demand either less work or more pay, but he refuses both, and in all the world I cannot see where I am to get another job. What am I to do? I must consult my confessor about it and if he agrees that the circumstances really are as I state them, then I can, unknown to my employer, take from him as much money or goods as will compensate me for the increased work I do. Oh, but I steal! No, for my employer's dissent is so palpably unreasonable and unjust that I am not bound to respect it, and besides I do him no wrong, for, according to himself at our first agreement, my work is worth the money.

These are a few cases allowed by the Church to save the poor and needy from absolute oppression.

But besides this she exhorts the rich to almsgiving for sweet mercy's sake. She commands them in the name of Christ, and she threatens them in the words of Holy Writ, saying: "Go to, now, ye rich—weep and howl in your miseries. Your riches are corrupted, your garments moth-eaten; your gold and silver cankered, the rust whereof shall be for a testimony against you and eat your flesh like fire; you have stored up wrath for the last day; for the alms you gave not cry out against you and their cry hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." The Church presents herself to the rich as the divinely appointed channel through which their superfluous wealth may flow down into the hands of the deserving poor. Lastly, the Church holds up to rich and poor alike the doctrine of the life here and of the life hereafter. Pointing to the life here she asks, After all, where are we to look for real happiness and contentment? Among the ungodly rich? No, but among the Christian poor. Why, even Christ Himself sought and found happiness in a lowly cabin, and His miseries began only when His mission forced Him thence into the homes of the rich and the palaces of kings. Where do we find the true heroes and heroines of our age? Among the great ones of the earth? No, but among the humblest of the humble. The Christian's King was a carpenter's apprentice, and His lowly followers are the true Christian nobility. O God bless the poor and the lowly for their cheerful dispositions, their tender sympathy for each other's ills and their ready willingness to share the

little they have! Thank God, Christ has promised that the poor we shall have always with us, for, to me, they seem as angels pointing out the way to heaven! And God bless this fair land where each brawny youth is a king and each lowly maiden is a queen, even though their palaces may be a workshop or a hovel! And God bless the Church, whose gentle, motherly influence represses alike the rash uprisings of her poorer children and the greed and tyranny of her richer and more powerful subjects! It is she and she alone, that can ever settle this vexed question by leading men to look at the matter from a Christian standpoint and in the light of Christian principles. "Time," she says to the poor man, "time is but a moment compared to eternity; and what matters it if you are poor and wretched as Lazarus here, if you have it in your power to be rich and happy forever hereafter." "Time," she says to the rich man, "time is but a moment compared to eternity; and it availeth you nothing if you gain the whole world here, if you suffer the loss of your immortal soul hereafter." It is the Church and the Church alone that can preserve the equilibrium of society—reducing the richest to the level of the poorest by preaching "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and exalting the very poorest infinitely above the very richest by promising or securing them possession of the kingdom of heaven.

Fourth Sunday After Easter.

LEAVE-TAKING.

"I go to Him that sent Me, and none of you asketh Me: Whither goest Thou?"—John xvi. 5.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Occasion of discourse and difficulty of passage.
I. Partings: 1. In song and story. 2. Christ's love for Apostles. 3. Three steps to Father.
II. Silence: 1. Joy and sorrow. 2. Bitter and sweet. 3. Bitter often more expedient.
III. Result: 1. Paraclete. 2. Peace. 3. Convicts of sin, justice, judgment.
Per.: 1. Pilgrims. 2. Whither goest thou? 3. From sin to justice and favorable judgment.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, the words I have read to you are an extract from Our Lord's last discourse to His disciples. Seated with them at table towards the close of the Last Supper, slowly and sorrowfully He began to tell them of His approaching departure. Of all His recorded utterances, this is the most sublime and, consequently, the most difficult to understand—so difficult, indeed, that the disciples hearing Him, said one to another: "What is this He saith to us? A little while and you shall not see Me, and again, a little while and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father. What is this He saith? for we know not what He speaketh." As I read the Gospel, I could well imagine you confronted with the same difficulty, asking the same questions. Let me try to explain.

The parting of relatives, of friends, is one of life's

vicissitudes which, most of all, appeals to human sympathy, and evokes the nobler qualities of our inner nature. No other tableau, no other scene enacted on life's stage so entirely absorbs the actors and so deeply moves the spectators. It may be the death-bed scene, the parting of the living from the dying; or by the graveside, the last sight of the dead. It may be the heartbroken wife or mother's good-bye to the criminal on his way to imprisonment, or the gallows. It may be the young soldier patriot's hurried farewell to wife and little ones, as he answers his country's call. Whichever it be, it is sure to be inexpressibly solemn and touching. The poet Homer makes such a scene—the parting of Hector and Andromache—the subject of his most famous passage—while, in the Bible, who does not love to turn to the book of Samuel and ponder over the parting of David and Jonathan! Who does not understand the evangelist's silence regarding the first parting of Jesus and Mary! Because, namely, he was loth to intrude on such a sacred scene and words were inadequate to describe it. David loved Jonathan as his own soul, and their parting was like tearing the soul from his body; but Our Lord loved His twelve Apostles each better than His soul—He lived twelve lives in them and He died twelve deaths when they parted. You remember that passage of the Gospel where, pointing to His Apostles, He says: "These are My Mother and My brethren and My all." His love for them, therefore, must have been an intensified mixture of the love of a boy for his

mother; of a brother for his sister; of a husband for his wife; of a lover for his beloved; of a friend for his friend; and hence, at parting from them, His heart must have been transfixed with every species of sorrow that has ever torn a human breast. But though, occasionally, the pent-up sorrow of His heart betrays itself in the melancholy tenor of His words, yet is He unwilling that there should be anything morose or selfish in His demeanor. Having loved His own from the beginning, He loved them and was their cheerful comforter to the end. On the eve of leave-taking, when hearts are laden with sorrow, love is apt to prompt both those that are to go and those that are to stay, to comfort each other by a forced gayety and to ignore as long as possible the inevitable moment of parting. Thus, too, out of His tender solicitude for His Apostles Our Lord entered into the spirit of the occasion, feasted with them, and joined in their hymn of thanksgiving. But soon a silence fell upon them all, and each felt that the unhappy moment had come. Our Lord evidently paused a moment for some one else to break the silence, but no one venturing, He was forced to begin. "I go," He says, "to Him that sent Me, and none of you asketh Me, whither goest Thou?" The Apostles might well have reminded Him that on a former occasion He had said: "I am in the Father and the Father in Me; the Father and I are one," and they might reasonably have asked Him how, being one with the Father, He could say now: "I have come out from the Father and come into the world; again, I leave

the world and I go to the Father." It will not do to say that Christ, by reason of the human nature He had assumed, could go to the Father, for He took His human nature so intimately as to become one with Himself, so that He can say of it: "I, and the Father, and this My human nature are one." "To leave the world and go to the Father," has a deeper meaning than that. In Holy Writ the word "world" is used sometimes in a good, sometimes in a bad sense. The good world are all created things of which we read that: "God saw all things that He had made, and they were very good." The bad world are sinners, of whom Our Lord says: "These My disciples are not of this world even as I am not of this world." For, here below, there are two elements, the rational and the material—the rational of the heavens, heavenly; and the material of the earth, earthly; the rational servants of Christ ordering themselves and all things to God; and irrational sinners who give to the earth their body and mind, heart and soul. Now, were it not for Christ's Redemption, we should all be part of the evil world, but by His grace we leave it and approach God. Now, this approach is accomplished by three steps, prefigured in Jacob's ladder. The first step is from sin to grace by the acquisition of faith, hope and charity; and the second step, from grace to glory, when faith is lost in the vision of God; when hope becomes possession and charity alone remains. These two steps, by which we leave the world and go to the Father, are peculiar to the souls of mortal men, but

the third is peculiar to Christ, viz., to leave the world with a soul and a glorified body, purged of all its earthly conditions. This then was Christ's meaning when He said: "I go to Him that sent Me." The body of Christ was to give the final proof that He was God and had gone to the Father. "When," says Our Lord, "when you shall have raised up the Son of man, then shall you know that I am God." His being raised up at His death on the cross, His rising from the tomb and His glorious Ascension, are each and all a series of corporal, visible proofs that He was God and went to the Father. That is why, at His death, the centurion said: "Verily this man was the Son of God." That is why at His Resurrection Thomas was convinced and said: "My Lord and my God." That is why the Apostles, after witnessing His Ascension cried out: "Verily, Jesus Christ is in the glory of God His Father."

"I go to Him that sent Me and none of you asketh Me, whither goest Thou." When Our Lord, that same night, had first intimated His departure from them Peter had asked: "Lord, whither goest Thou?" And Thomas demanded: "Lord, show us the way that we may follow Thee." But after they have learned He is going to suffering and to death; after He had said: "The time cometh when whosoever killeth you will think he doeth a service to God," they no longer demand: "Lord, whither goest Thou?" they are no longer eager to follow Him. "For," He adds, "because I have spoken these things to you sorrow hath filled your heart." Such,

Brethren, is the nature of the human heart—wide enough to entertain almost infinite joy, and again so small as to be filled by one drop of adversity. Such is the nature of human gratitude—a life-long kindness is soon forgotten at the first favor denied. Our hearts are like the flowers of springtime—under the genial sunshine of prosperity, they spread out to their fullest extent, but they quickly close up in the darkness of suffering and sorrow. And so with the Apostles—sorrow filled their hearts when they learned their future was to be one, not of joy but of sadness; not of earthly greatness but of humiliation and death. Notice that though it pained Our Lord to cause them pain, still, He did not shrink from His purpose and His duty. True, He coats the bitter pill of separation with the sweet assurance of ultimate return, saying: "A little while and you shall not see Me, and again, a little while and you shall see Me; for I will see you again and your hearts shall rejoice and your joy no man shall take from you." Still, the love of Our Lord being of the true kind, He fears not to mingle in their draught the useful with the sweet. Many a father and mother who think they fondly love their children, in reality hate them, by acceding to all their desires, humoring their every whim, and encouraging them in habits that must ultimately accomplish their ruin. Many a son or daughter, called by God to a higher life in religion, refuses, through false love of home or parents, to follow the call, lest, forsooth, sorrow should fill their hearts. Many a person allows his or her

friends to go from bad to worse rather than risk offending them by a timely warning or a gentle reproof. These are cases where duty is to be done at any sacrifice, and duty once done, rest assured good will follow, and your sorrow be turned into joy. The Apostles' love for Christ, because imperfect, clung to the present good of His presence among them; but Christ's love for them, being perfect, looked rather to what good the future held in store. "It is expedient," He says, "that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go I will send Him to you." How often we see this illustrated in every-day life! There is, for example, in the family an infant, a boy or girl, a young man or woman—the idol of the family, one of God's living saints; too good, no doubt, for this world, so that the hand of death descends on him and God claims him for His own. In our short-sighted selfishness we wail and lament, but if our love were of the true kind we would look across time into eternity and hear the beloved voice assure us: "It is expedient, not only for myself but for you, that I go." For very often in that family is a careless Christian, a careless Catholic, whose soul, by affliction, is brought back to God; whose intercessor before God that saintly relative becomes; to whom that blessed soul may justly say: "It is expedient for you that I go, for if I go not, the grace of God will not come to you, but if I go I will send it to you." The Apostles must have realized this, if not then and there, at least soon afterwards, for St. Luke tells us that after witnessing the Ascen-

sion, they went back into Jerusalem with great joy. They knew that at Adam's fall hostilities had been declared between earth and heaven, and that the war then begun could never be amicably settled until man had been justly punished for his rebellion, until he had conquered God's enemies with whom he had allied himself, and sent to heaven a man as hostage and messenger of peace. All this Christ accomplished, satisfying for man's sin by His Passion and death, leading captivity captive by His victory over sin and death at His Resurrection, and carrying with Him, in His Ascension, Humanity to the Father from whom it had been estranged so long. Then, and only then, was the Spirit of God, the Paraclete, sent down and diffused in the hearts of men. As the moisture must first ascend heavenward before the refreshing showers descend, so, not until after the Ascension of Our Lord, could the Holy Ghost come to renew the face of the earth. This promise to send the Holy Spirit was that final proof of Christ's paternal solicitude for His little family—"When I go to the Father," He says, "I will not leave you orphans, but I will send the Paraclete to comfort and strengthen, to guide and protect you, until My second coming." As on a previous occasion Christ reserved the better wine for the end of the feast, so now, His final gift to man, the Holy Ghost, is the most precious of all. At creation He gave the world and the fulness thereof; by His incarnation He gave Himself, but only for a time; but now He gives the Holy Ghost to be ours for all time. Nay, the mission of the Holy

Spirit is to the virtuous and wicked alike—to teach the virtuous all truth and so lead them after Christ through worldly afflictions, through death, to the throne of the Father; to warn sinners that a like judgment awaits them as their prince, the devil, has already received; to convince them of Christ's righteousness, forasmuch as the life-long tendency and final destination of His followers, as of Himself, is to go to the Father; and to convict them of sin, because with all the evidences and effects of Christianity before them they still refuse to believe. For whatever of good is in the world is all the work of the Holy Ghost. Every saintly soul, every chaste nun, every devoted priest; every good thought conceived, word spoken, or act done; every affliction cheerfully borne, every suffering brother relieved; every hospital, asylum, and charitable institution in the land; every death-bed sanctified, every soul saved; the peace of individuals, families, and nations; in short, everything noble which the love of God or one's neighbor can evoke from the human heart—all are effects of Christianity, the fruits of the Holy Ghost. And if blessed are they who have not seen and have believed; if less blessed are they who, having seen, believed; surely, cursed are they who, though they have seen the marvellous works of Christ and the Holy Spirit, still refuse to believe.

Brethren, whether we will it or not, of each of us it is true that we go to Him that sent us, but too rarely alas! do we stop to consider and ask ourselves that all-important question: "Whither goest thou?"

Yet our time is coming. A little while and the world shall see us, and again a little while and the world shall not see us, and well will it be for us then if we shall have gone to the Father. Let us keep our eyes ever raised to this, our sublime destiny, as the mariner to his guiding star. Let it be our consolation amid the sorrows and ills of life that we are ultimately to go to Him that sent us, to the Father. May the Spirit of God, when He comes at this Pentecostal season, find no sin in us of which to convict us. May our last step toward the Father, our death, be such that a favorable judgment may follow. May we all our lives so unremittingly seek the justice of God that in the life to come we may attain the kingdom of heaven.

Fifth Sunday After Easter.

THE CHRISTIAN'S JACOB'S LADDER.

"*Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself unspotted from this world.*"—James i. 27.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Ideal life. II. Charity, prayer, clean heart. III. Inversion.
I. Undefiled: 1. Occasions of sin. 2. Israelitic defilements. 3. Cover on vessel.
II. Prayerful: 1. Pray always. 2. Vocal and mental. 3. Effects of prayer.
III. Charitable: 1. Life's miseries and blessings. 2. Nobility of poor. 3. Charity's effect.
Per.: 1. Reversion. 2. Our sinfulness. 3. Our Jacob's ladder.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, in to-day's Epistle and Gospel, if taken and studied together, you will discover the outlines of an ideal Christian life. Our Lord's discourse on prayer is supplemented by St. James's definition of religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father. To suppose that Christian perfection consists altogether in contemplation or lip service is to deceive ourselves. We must not only be hearers but doers of the word, for it is not the man who saith "Lord, Lord," but he who doth the Father's will, that is saved. Righteousness demands, therefore, that the Christian, besides being possessed of a prayerful spirit, should plunge into the thick of life's activities, bear the full weight of life's inevitable

cross, extend a helping hand to the fatherless and the widows in their tribulation, and withal keep himself unspotted from this world. These, then, are the three rounds in the Jacob's ladder whereby we clamber heavenward: a merciful hand, a prayerful soul, and a clean heart. In considering them let us invert their order so as to represent to ourselves a Christian guarding against defilement by prayer and acts of mercy—an order more convenient and logical and one sanctioned by Christ when in Gethsemani He said to His Apostles: "Watch ye and pray, that in the hour of trial ye enter not into temptation."

"To keep oneself unspotted from this world." Brethren, the world reeks defilement, it is full of the occasions of sin. As surely as the body, our shoes and clothing and our skin contract or exude uncleanness amid the efforts of a busy day, so surely does the soul become more or less contaminated by contact with the world. Within, without, at home, abroad, everywhere, temptations are encountered. In the nineteenth chapter of the book of Numbers we read that when a death occurred, the tent and every person and thing therein, and every open vessel that had no covering bound upon it, were unclean. Being then in the desert, the Israelites lived in tents and stored their necessaries in earthen jars. Of the many things prescribed by law as rendering men unclean, unfit to mingle with their fellows and worship before God's tabernacle, none left so dark a stain as sin's consummation, death. One day sufficed

to purge from other defilements, but he that closed the dying eyes, or washed or buried the corpse, whatever the home contained and whosoever entered it—all were made unclean and remained unclean until, having washed in the water of expiation on the third and again on the seventh day, they were thus restored to fellowship with their kindred. But note, I pray you, the exception. Whatever vessel had a cloth upon it escaped defilement. Brethren, we are earthen vessels all, fashioned by the hand of God, and the very air around is charged with death, with physical and moral death. Our dangers of defilement outnumber those of the Israelites as much as his outnumbered those of the vessels in his tent. Within our homes, lonely though they be, within ourselves lurk sin's occasions, and if, walking abroad, we come in touch with our fellowmen, the dangers increase a hundredfold. Nor does defilement work in us less mischief or bring less hardship than it did to the Israelite. Once defiled, we become morally ostracized, cut off from God and a menace to our fellowman. Oh well were it if, until expiation had been done, sinners were obliged to stand aloof and cry: "Unclean! unclean!" for they only serve to contaminate all with whom they come in contact. But, says the text, whatever vessel had a cloth bound on it was not defiled. Brethren, such vessels are our hearts, and the cloth with which we must securely cover them is the grace of God. In our hearts we treasure up God's gifts and thence disperse them to our fellowman, but believe me, unless the vessel be

covered over by God's grace, its contents will be spoiled and our charity all in vain. No matter how precious or how common the contents, no matter how plain or how beautiful the vessel, unless it be covered securely it is sure to be defiled. Securely, did I say, aye and constantly, for so insistent and all-pervading is the death around us that there is need on our part of a holy watchfulness. Our eyes, our ears, our tongue, all our external and internal senses are so many openings to the heart and soul, and must be closely and continually guarded if we hope to keep ourselves unspotted from this world. Not that our hearts should be as vessels void and empty, but there should be a steadfast shutting in of virtue and of truth and as resolute a shutting out of error and of sin. "Thy Kingdom Come" should be our so prevailing sentiment that no room would be left for any less noble thought. Such is the cloth which must cover our hearts and be bound upon them, sealed, as it were, with the seal of perseverance—an unremittingly watchful coöperation with the grace of God. "And what I say to you," says Christ, "I say to all; watch."

Watch and pray. Brethren, if even the Apostles had to be reminded of the necessity of prayer in repelling temptation, how much more we, poor laggard followers of Christ! And reminded we are on almost every Gospel page. Our Lord's example, His night-long vigils on the mountain side, is supplemented by His teaching: "Pray ye always and faint not." Note the word "always." It is frequently explained away

as meaning that to labor is to pray, provided that whatever we do in word or in work, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the context calls for a more literal interpretation. It was her importunity that secured the widow justice, and incessant knocking opened the baker's door, and these and such like parables Christ uses to illustrate what holy insistence must characterize our prayers. Not that we must be ever on our knees; but as we always find sufficient time for meals, so we must learn to always snatch from business cares sufficient time for prayer. "On the law of the Lord," says Holy Writ, "the just man meditates by night and day," that is, at uniform and stated intervals. In fact, if we consider upon the one hand God, and ourselves upon the other, it would seem we are bound to pray much oftener than is generally thought possible or consistent with our duties. God's earthly abode, be it in a temple or a human soul, should be a house of prayer. The heart is where its treasure is, and if we loved God as we should, ours would be prayerful lives. Could the young man feel for God the love he feels for his sweetheart, how assiduously he would meditate the law of the Lord, how often his thoughts and dreams would wander heavenward, what a great saint he would become! Our wretched destitution, too, should teach us the need of prayer. Directly they fell, our first parents realized their nakedness. They had lost their robe of innocence, and humanity since then has continued to clothe itself in the rags of sin. Nay, sin has soaked in like water through the

entire human system, and permeated like oil its very bones, and there produced a sort of moral paralysis. Of ourselves we can do nothing. We are as helpless as a nest of unfledged birds, and like them we should lift our arms in supplication, and open-mouthed cry to our heavenly Father to give us each day our daily bread. Prayer is the second round in our Jacob's ladder. Guard as we may against defilement, we shall never achieve perfection without prayer. It will not do to remove our vices as we do our beards, leaving the roots for a further growth. Our malady is internal, and not to be cured by such outward appliances as alms or fasts, but only by the internal medicine of heartfelt prayer. That is the cordial that fires the soul and sends the blessed heat through the entire man, rendering him malleable as fire does the iron, and making him glow as glowed Christ's face and garb on Thabor. But lip service will not do; our prayers must be mental as well. Prayer purely vocal is like a brief but violent summer shower—it does more harm than good, but prayer that is likewise mental is as the soft but steady drizzle that delights the husbandman and produces abundant fruit. But the chief factor in prayer is the heart. Our minds should not retain but pass along the spiritual pabulum to our wills and hearts. A well-trained beagle will not devour the game, but brings it to his master's feet. So, too, intelligence collects ideas for the heart. True, a toll may be levied by the intellect on what it passes in, but if it confiscate all, the heart will starve. If the nurse not

only masticates her baby's food but swallows it besides, the infant dies. And given a heart once cold or dead, all attempts at prayer are as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. But a tongue, a mind, and heart delicately attuned to prayer lift like sweet music their happy possessor heavenward. Like a man on a lofty tower, we begin to appreciate the littleness of earthly things. Our judgments are comparative, and so accustomed becomes the prayerful man to the contemplation of God's greatness, that he learns soon to despise this little world, to bear misfortune with equanimity and prosperity with indifference. In the words of the Psalmist: "He hath made the Most High his refuge, and no evil can come to him."

Watch and pray and visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation. Brethren, practical benevolence is the third round in the ladder of perfection, the final requisite in a religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father. The truly religious are essentially altruistic. In playing the good Samaritan or humanity's Simon of Cyrene, they forget their own and lighten their neighbor's burdens. "Man born of woman, liveth a short time and is filled with many miseries." Such is humanity's biography. Torture at birth, misery through life, at death agony. In driving our first parents from paradise God said: "Cursed be the earth, thorns and thistles shall it bear you," and that curse has echoed down the ages in one unbroken series of human woes. Divine and human wisdom agree that the yoke is

heavy on every child of Eve, from the time he comes from his mother's womb until he returns into the womb of mother earth, for suffering and death knock with impartial hand at the peasant's cot and the palaces of kings. Consider the numberless diseases of childhood, the spiritual afflictions of maturity, and the miseries of the aged, when, like drowning men, they feel the last plank slipping from their grasp, and see the great ocean of eternity slowly but surely rising to engulf them. Life begins with a scream and ends with a moan, because there is in our hearts an aching void that nothing short of God can ever appease. True, we are sometimes happy, but our happiness is as that of one born with heart disease, who never having tasted the sweetness of relief, scarcely feels the bitterness of his pain. If we could see ourselves as we are, as the angels see us, we would weep for selfish pity, and the unbegotten babe would beg to be left in its nothingness forever. Still it is all God's mercy. We prodigals wander afar from Him and with the scourge of tribulation He drives us back. When miseries multiply, the blessed resolve: "I will arise and go to my Father" is easily made. It is only when he has become as wretched and forlorn as the blind beggar by the gates of Jericho that the sinner strains to hear the approaching footsteps of his Lord, and lifts his voice in that blessed prayer: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Not more true is this of the individual Christian than of the Christian Church, for whereas she thrives best under unremitting persecution, temporal prosperity has

ever wrought in her ruin and corruption. The same is true of the human race—the more they prospered the farther they wandered from God and the more dire the periodic calamities with which He recalled them. In fact God's truest servants are ever more numerous among the afflicted and the poor than in the ranks of fortune's favorites. The poor are the true Christian nobility, and among them are enacted day by day scenes of Christian heroism, deeds of heroic fortitude and patience, such as the proud aristocrats with all their pretensions are seldom capable of performing or appreciating. For though worldlings must taste betimes the chalice of suffering, it is not the chalice of Christ, but of the world, it is not drained with Christian cheerfulness and resignation, but with sorrow and loathing. Only they, says Holy Writ, who drink the chalice of the Lord are made the friends of God. But this divine affiliation is produced both in the actual sufferers and in those witnesses of those sufferings who try to relieve them. Go into the homes of poverty and disease and see the trials there so patiently endured and tell me if you are not a better man for the experience. See the little orphans wailing farewell to one another and to the old home perhaps forever, and going off to spend and end their lives how or where God only knows. Again see the parentless brother and sister, or the widowed mother proudly braving the great world, and winning from it an independent subsistence for the little ones at home. Stand by the deathbed of these latter-day saints and martyrs, and watch

their last brave struggle and you will feel as though your heart's blood might well up to your eyes and you could shed tears of blood for very pity. And pity is akin to love, for he who can and does feel a hearty and practical pity for a suffering fellow-creature is very near to the love and the kingdom of God. From nothing else can we derive such solid spiritual comfort, such an uplifting of our whole being, as from an earnest effort to relieve the unfortunate. When a man, his heart swelling with sympathy, hastens to comfort sorrow or relieve affliction, he is truly God-like. Bearing in his soul the image of God, he presents in his outward demeanor a likeness as perfect as may be of the Christ sympathizing with sorrow and healing the diseased. Nay more, his charity has Christ Himself for its object, "for," says He, "whatsoever you do unto them you do likewise unto Me." Tribulation, therefore, is but a form of God's mercy. Spiritual ills and spiritual death render men unclean, but worldly trials, on the contrary, tend to ennoble and to sanctify. They are blessings in disguise, affording us, as they do, opportunities for atonement, detaching us from the world, evoking all that is purest and best in our natures, and, when sin has been done, sending us like frightened children back into God's arms crying: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

A clean heart, a prayerful soul, a generous hand. In this order, Brethren, we agreed to consider these three, but alas! it was an error, we deceived ourselves. The sinless can afford to confine their

thoughts to the higher things, as how to keep themselves pure by pious exercises and works of mercy, but who alack! who of us is sinless? If we say we are without sin, the truth is not in us. So earthly are we that the first stage in our progress toward God will be to emerge from the black pit of sin into the light and life of grace. We must first come up into God's kingdom on earth, and drawing our Jacob's ladder after us, plant it there anew and resume our journey heavenward. We plant it and reverse it. Under the stress of manifold tribulations we turn prayerfully to God and so emerge chastened and cleansed from sin, but our farther progress upward will be by the same steps reversed, a watchfulness against defilement, a less selfish, a higher and a holier form of prayer and a complete abandonment of self in the interest of humanity and of God. For "this is religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father, to watch and pray and to visit the widows and the orphans and comfort them in their tribulation."

Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

"*When the Paraclete cometh, He shall give testimony of Me.*"—John xv. 26.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Truth's corner-stone. II. Opinions. III. Suggestions of arguments.
I. Guilt of sin: 1. Man-God. 2. Messias in figure and prophecy. 3. In Gospels.
II. Christ's character: 1. Idolatry. 2. Hypocrisy. 3. Died to prove assertion.
III. Christ's deeds: 1. His miracles. 2. Resurrection. 3. Ascension.
Per.: 1. Arguments for infidels. 2. Our confidence. 3. Lord's second coming.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, disbelief in the divinity of Jesus Christ is and ever has been the world's blackest sin; it will be the gravest indictment brought against mankind by the Spirit of truth. The divinity of Christ is the corner-stone of our temple of faith, whose removal means the destruction of the entire edifice. It is a doctrine founded on undeniable evidence, supported by irrefutable arguments. Still they have never been wanting who would say: "We do not believe." In the groups that surrounded Him in Judea and Galilee, in the throng at the foot of the cross, opinions differed. Some scoffed, others adored; some reviled, others wept. So too, to-day, the agnostic, the Unitarian, the votary of science, all unite in denying Him that bought them. Vast num-

bers of so-called Christians, under the lead of pseudo-Christian ministers, practice a religion that never rises above the purely natural. They utterly eliminate the supernatural, and if, perchance, they revere the Christ as the ideal man, they absolutely refuse to adore Him as God.

Brethren, to prove to you this doctrine were but to offend your lively faith. Your very presence here is a profession of faith, and joined as you are in Christian worship with the millions who, to-day, bowed before Christ's altar, you form a link in an infallible chain of arguments proving Christ's divinity. But you will meet those who will demand a reason for the faith that is in you, and I would have you ready with an answer. Neither are the arguments I give all that might be adduced, nor are they fully developed. The preacher's function, I believe, is to suggest individual thought rather than to convey developed ideas.

My unbelieving friend agrees with me that God exists and that the Bible is His word; that man, fallen from his original innocence, needed and was promised a Redeemer who, whether He has come or not, though an ideal man, could never be more than a mere mortal. Brethren, that position, whether held by Jew or Unitarian, is untenable. For a mortal to be the Redeemer of mankind is a contradiction. The infinite distance between God's dignity and man's nothingness must be the measure of the guilt of original sin—an infinite offence calling for an infinite atonement. Now, if all the saints and angels

that ever lived, with the Blessed Virgin at their head, were to unite for their whole lives, aye forever, in one act of reparation, they could never satisfy God's offended majesty. That is one reason why out of hell there is no redemption; viz., because the atonement of those lost souls, however intense or protracted, can never transcend the merely finite. God alone can expiate in a manner infinitely meritorious. The Redemption was a work not for man alone, for it exceeded his powers; nor for God alone, for man had sinned; but for both united in one—the man-God. The Redeemer, come when He will, must essentially have united the divine and human natures in His single personality. Has such a figure appeared in history? How shall I know Him? I turn to the Old Testament, a book sacred alike to Unitarian and Jew, and there I find Him fully described. As a result of the original promise of His coming, made to our first parents, I find Him, the expectation of Israel, alive in the minds and hearts of the people for four thousand years, and faith in Him sustained by type and figure and prophecy. I see Him typified in the saving ark of Noe, and in the paschal lamb whose blood on the door-posts saved the people from God's avenging angel. I see Him prefigured in Moses—the deliverer of his people; in Joseph, sold by his brethren to become afterwards their saviour; in Isaac, staggering under the wood for sacrifice; in Abel, slain by his brother; in Jonas, rising again after three days in the bowels of the earth. The prophets tell me when and where He was to be born

—born of a virgin; they describe the adoration and gifts of the eastern kings; they foretell His lowly position in life, the incidents of His public career, His sufferings, the circumstances of His death—all are described with the minutest exactness even to such trivial matters as gambling for His clothing, or giving Him, for drink, vinegar and gall. With His photograph in one hand and a detailed account of His life in the other, how can I fail, when I meet Him, to recognize the Messias? And meet Him I do in the person of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, which is but the history of Christ and His followers and the doctrines they preached. Therein I find recorded as accomplished facts all that the ancient Testament foreshadowed. Such a weight of evidence is there in favor of Christ the Messias, that if an angel from heaven were to teach otherwise I would answer him "Anathema." If God were to charge me with blasphemy, I would reply: "Not guilty; you, not I, are responsible for the error." For the two Testaments are like the cherubim described in Exodus, their wings fold over the ark of the New Covenant, Christ's sacred personality, and they gaze ever through Him upon each other. They are the seraphim of Isaias's vision, who adoringly turn to Jesus and forever echo one another, chanting: "Holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth."

But let us suppose for a moment that Christ was a mere man, commissioned by God to reform society by introducing Christianity. What follows? First, it would be short-sighted policy on the part of God,

Men are ever inclined to adore as gods the sources of great benefits. Thus the Pagans adore the sun, the Egyptians the elephant, and the Israelites in the desert, when hungering for the flesh-pots of Egypt, adored a golden calf. To empower Christ to confer such incalculable blessing on mankind and to expect them, nevertheless, to abstain from idolatry, would argue on the part of God an ignorance as well of human nature as of future events. In that case, too, Christ, whose holiness and disinterestedness are vouched for even by Pilate and Judas—Christ would have proved false to His mission by arrogating to Himself divine worship, and society to-day, plunged as it is in idolatry, is more iniquitous than it was two thousand years ago. Why, in that case we would have to conclude that God's providence has lost its hold on the guidance of human events, and that the marvels Christ and His followers wrought, and the wondrous endurance of His doctrines and institutions, have been effected independent of and in opposition to Almighty God! If Christ was not God, He was king of hypocrites, something even His worst enemies have not dared to assert. The Apostles, who knew Him as brother knows brother, testified to His sanctity with their love and their lives. His enemies even, the Jews, declared no man had ever spoken as He, and admitted He went around doing good. And are we, as they, to believe Him in all things but the assertion of His divinity? Are we to revere Him as everything save as God? "I am the Son of God," He declared; and though the rabble stoned Him as

a blasphemer, He did not retract. Paul and Barnabas and John the Baptist confessed they were neither gods nor Christ. Though His words were a scandal to the Jews and a stumbling-block to the Gentiles, yet Christ did not recall them. Before Caiphas, when on trial for His life, He declared His divinity. Did He not die on the cross for it, and to prove it? And can I do less than, like the centurion, confess that verily this was the Son of God?

Brethren, not only did Christ assert His divinity; He also proved it by His miracles. "Though you believe not Me," He said, "believe My works." He changed water into wine; He multiplied the loaves and fishes; He commanded the winds and the sea; He healed diseases humanly incurable, and raised the dead to life. No man, whatever his mission in this world, has since or before enjoyed such power. Miracles have been wrought before Christ and after Christ but, on analysis, you will find all were effected in the name or by the power of Jesus. The power of miracles is peculiarly an attribute of God. Nor is there room for doubt as to the reliability of their chroniclers, as the New Testament is a history compiled by eye-witnesses that has for nineteen hundred years braved every critical assault. And if its narrative is worthy of credit why not, also, its positive assertions? If I believe the evangelist recounting Christ's lowliness, why mistrust him extolling Christ's greatness? He is but a helpless babe, but the angels around and above Him sing "Glory to God in the highest." Humble Simeon and Anna

bless God for having shown them the Saviour of Israel, and the kings do homage before Him. He is a mere stripling in the midst of the doctors, but they are astounded at His answers. He is no more than any one of the throng that goes down to the Jordan for baptism, but the heavens open and God proclaims: "This is My beloved Son." The ascent of Thabor is as steep for Him as for His Apostles, but presently He is transfigured, adored by the prince of prophets, and once more proclaimed to be the Son of God. Lord, ask me as you asked St. Peter: "Who do you say the Son of man is?" Ah, I will not turn my puny voice to heaven saying "Father, He is not Thy Son." In the face of such evidence I can only answer with Peter: "Thou art the Son of the living God."

Brethren, Christ's Resurrection is the culminating proof of His divinity; the corner-stone of Christianity. "If Christ be not risen," says St. Paul, "our faith is vain." The Jews recognized its importance when they sealed the great stone that closed His tomb and set a guard of soldiers. For Christ had repeatedly foretold that He would rise again the third day. Future events are known to no man; no, not even to the angels in heaven, but to God alone; and though God has given men the gift of prophecy, He has never empowered any man to foreshadow His own personal destiny. Christ's divinity is doubly proven by His Resurrection, and His Resurrection is certain beyond the shadow of a doubt. That He actually died is testified to by His exhausted condi-

tion before crucifixion, by His three hours on the cross, by the gaping wound in His side, by the soldiers who refrained from breaking His limbs because they found Him already dead. And that He rose the third day from the dead, who shall deny? They will tell you those timid Apostles rolled back the stone and stole His body, that the rigid discipline of Rome was relaxed for once and the soldiers slept; but ask them for their proofs and they will bring forward, as did the chief priests, these same sleepy soldiers as witnesses of the theft. Far different the proofs of our belief. We know whom we have believed—we know that our Redeemer liveth. We have met Him newly risen on the way to Emmaus and heard it from His very lips. We have seen in Him evidence of rational life when He expounded the Scriptures and upbraided our incredulity; of sentient life when He heeded our hospitable entreaties; of animal life when He shared our meal. Why, have we not put our finger into the very print of the nails, and our hand into His side? What remains for us to do, in the face of such evidence, but to fall down adoringly and exclaim: "My Lord and my God!"

Brethren, the Ascension which we last Thursday commemorated is still another proof of Christ's divinity. Had He been a mere mortal, He could not have ascended of Himself; there would have been need of Elias's fiery chariot or of some similiar manifestation of almighty power. That is why the Church draws such a sharp distinction between Christ's man-

ner of going heavenward and Mary's, for Mary was assumed or lifted up by God, but Christ ascended. For no one ascends to heaven by his own volition and power, but He, the Son of man, who descended from heaven. The Word was made flesh, clothing Himself, identifying Himself with our humanity, and dwelt amongst us leading captivity captive, and ascended on high to be for all time the Giver of gifts to men. The power with which He freed men from the slavery of the devil and placed on them His own light yoke and sweet burden proved Him to be God. He had proved it sufficiently by His victory over sin and death, but during the forty days between His Resurrection and Ascension, as we read in the Acts, He showed His divinity by many further proofs, and He confirmed it by His Ascension. Finally, He proves it by the permanency of that Church which He perfected during those days, and by the gifts with which He endowed her. He sent the Spirit of love, the All-good, upon her, to be diffused in our hearts crying Abba, Father, to encourage us with the thought that we shall have our Father for our judge and our Brother for our advocate. By His Resurrection and Ascension He has animated our faith in His divinity and all that it entails, enlivened our hope of arising and ascending as He did, and inflamed our charity, for where lies our treasure thither tend our hearts. He has given to all men a tendency upwards which, if rightly directed, leads to heaven. Many, alas! mistake the mount of God, climbing the hills of knowledge or of power in the vain hope that, once at the

summit, they may be able to touch the heavens with their hand or take possession of the sun. But the pathway heavenward lies not on earthly slopes, however fair; no, not even up glorious Thabor does it lead, but up Calvary alone, for as it was necessary for Christ to suffer and so enter into His glory, so His every faithful follower must deny himself and take up his cross and follow the Saviour through many tribulations into the kingdom of heaven.

Brethren, we have twice heard Christ's divinity proclaimed by God the Father Himself; we have heard it from the angels by His empty tomb; we have read it in almost every chapter of the Scriptures, Old and New; Nature has confessed it by her wondrous obedience; Christ has proven it by His prophecies and miracles; the blood of the martyrs loudly asserts it; the marvellous spread of the Christian religion does and will bear testimony to it for all time. But these arguments are for the unbelieving. For ourselves, we have within us an indefinable sense of security, whereby, without inquiring into the why or the wherefore, we believe in Our Lord with a faith that nothing can shatter. Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed. Our faith is our joy and our crown. Let it also instil into our lives a measure of salutary fear. When the Lord was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, He came as the lowliest of the low. Let us not forget He is to come again with power and majesty to render to every man according to his deserts, when the wicked shall go into everlasting fire but the just into life everlasting.

Pentecost Sunday.

The Holy Ghost.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex. : The difficulty of the subject.
I. What is the Holy Ghost? : 1. "Holy Spirit." 2. Human mind. 3. Difference.
II. He is God : 1. From Scripture. 2. Arian difficulty. 3. Three modes of production.
III. Objections : 1. How "sent"? 2. Words of Amos. 3. Wresting the Scriptures.
IV. Descent : 1. Special coming. 2. Necessity of gifts. 3. Knowledge, tongues, miracles, love.
Per.: 1. Special necessity of love. 2. Fortitude and patience. 3. Invocation.

SERMON.

"O the depths of the knowledge of God!" exclaims St. Paul in the presence of the mystery of the Trinity. "Who shall declare His generation?" asks Isaias, speaking of the birth of the Word from the Father. And, Brethren, not less incomprehensible, because not less divine, is our subject to-day, the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. It is one of these heavenly mysteries unfathomable even to the angelic intelligences, altogether above and beyond the range of human reason, and known to mortals only through faith in the revelations of God. May He who can give speech to the dumb and render eloquent the tongues of even little ones, may He empower me to treat as worthily as mortal may of His nature, of His glorious descent upon the Apostles, of the wondrous gifts with which He endowed them; and may He give you to

understand the means whereby you may worthily receive and fittingly and lastingly entertain so august and so imposing a guest.

What then, Brethren, is the Holy Ghost? He is God, coequal and consubstantial with the other persons of the Trinity, and yet, as the third person of that Trinity, He is really distinct from the Father and the Son. The name "Holy Ghost" or "Holy Spirit" might with equal truth be applied to either the Father or the Son, but because the third person proceeds from them both as from a single principle, because He is common to them both, being the love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father, therefore that name which is common to all three is rightly appropriated by Him who is the link that binds the universe to God and God to God in the bonds of benevolence and love. If one might without irreverence seek to still farther penetrate the secrets of the Divinity, a study of the human mind will afford a shadowy concept of the Blessed Trinity. The soul, the highest type of creature known to us, naturally bears the strongest semblance to the Creator. Now, the mind, in studying an object, produces within itself an image of that object, and around and over that image, if the object be a lovable one, the will fondly hovers and is led on thereby to the pursuit and the enjoyment of the object itself. So it is in a measure with the Divinity. The Father, contemplating His own all-perfect nature, begets an image thereof, and that image being no less a substantial reality than His only-begotten Son, there is

produced between them by the divine will a third being, the Spirit of love, the Holy Ghost. For there is this difference between the operations of the human mind and the divine, that the image and the love of an object produced by the intellect and will of the former are as unsubstantial and transitory as a mirrored reflection or a passing emotion, but not so in the latter, for whatever falls within the radius of the Divinity, though it be in a measure distinct from God, must still be substantially God Himself. God, the Son, therefore, is the intelligence of the Father, by whom and in whom, as in an exemplar, the Father contemplates His own infinite perfections and their numberless imitations in the universe of creatures, and God the Holy Ghost is the love that results from this contemplation, and reaching out clasps the entire realm of beings to the bosom of their Creator.

Brethren, it was precisely because the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son and by them is sent upon Christ's followers that that controversy arose which called in question His divinity, and for centuries rent in twain the Christian Church. For, argued the Arians, as the person sent, such as a servant or soldier, is always inferior to the sender, his master or commander, so the Holy Ghost, though He be first of creatures, is still but a creature and in no sense equal to the Father and the Son. Nevertheless, Brethren, the Scriptures emphatically assert that the Holy Ghost is God. Only God is everywhere, and "whither," says the Psalmist,

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"shall I go from Thy omnipresent Spirit?" Only God is omniscient, and says St. Paul: "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Only God is omnipotent, and, prays the Royal Prophet: "Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created." To have a temple of worship is God's exclusive prerogative, but, says St. Paul: "Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit?" To "speak by the mouth of His holy prophet" was surely peculiar to the Lord God of Israel, but St. Peter says, "those holy men of God spoke inspired by the Holy Ghost." Finally, nothing could be plainer than St. Peter's assertion of this truth when, having detected the duplicity of Ananias, he said to him: "Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God." What, therefore, of the Arian argument? Certainly, when it is a question of the exercise of authority, the sender is necessarily superior to the person sent, but there is another manner of sending forth, by production, namely, as when the sun puts forth its rays and the trees their blossoms and fruit, and here is involved no inequality, for rays and flowers and fruit are by nature identical with the principle from which they emanate. Such, in some sort, is the emanation of the Son from the Father, and of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. But here again the heretics sought occasion to attack the divinity of the third person, arguing that as God produces by generation and creation only, therefore the Holy

Ghost, who is certainly not the begotten of the Father, must of necessity be a mere creature. But our holy faith maintains that besides the generation of the Word and the creation of the universe, there is in God a third productive operation by which the Holy Spirit proceeds from the single will of the Father and the Son. Not less productive than the divine intellect is the divine will. The Son, therefore, proceeds from the Father alone by generation; the Holy Ghost from both Father and Son by mutual love, and the universe of angels and men and things from Father, Son and Holy Ghost by the act of creation.

But, Brethren, since God is everywhere, how can the Holy Ghost be said to have been sent into the world or upon the Apostles? God is indeed everywhere, but it is possible for the divine persons to begin to exist under a new aspect where they did not previously so exist. For example, God the Son, as St. John says, "was in the world, but the world knew Him not," but in the plenitude of time the Father sent Him, made under the law, born of a woman, so that the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us in an altogether new and extraordinary manner. So, too, the Holy Spirit. When an infidel or heretic is converted, the Holy Ghost comes to him under the form of faith and hope and charity. When a sinner repents, the Spirit of God begins to dwell in him by grace and its accompanying virtues. That is why these virtues are by Isaias called spirits, "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel

and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord," and St. Paul adds "that though there be diversities of graces, it is the same spirit who worketh all in all."

Brethren, in the presence of this doctrine so plainly scriptural, so consistent with reason, the arguments of the enemies of the Holy Ghost seem absurdly puerile. Especially childish was their attempt to disprove His divinity from the words of the prophet Amos: "He [God] formeth the thunder and createth the spirit." The passage being the prophet's appeal to Israel to return to God through fear of His greatness, he adduces a thunderstorm as an example of the awful power of Him whom the winds and the seas obey. The force of the objection, therefore, consists in a misinterpretation of the word "spirit" which here evidently signifies the winds. It is a fair example of the devices to which heretics resort to pervert Scripture and combat the truth. Their method is to wrest Scripture into conformity with their own ideas, and when this is impossible, to reject altogether the more stubborn passages. Speaking with the Samaritan woman, Christ said: "The Spirit is God, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth," and although the text may more correctly be quoted of the divine nature, meaning that God is a spirit, etc., still the Arians in their frantic efforts to prove that the Spirit is not God, totally erased these words from their Bibles. The Lutherans adopted a similar method in dealing with Machabees and St. James, where they

say respectively: "It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they be freed from their sins," and "faith without works is dead;" and Our Lord's words: "This is My body," were by the Calvinists either changed so as to read: "This signifies My body," or else altogether rejected and expunged. Thus do they wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, for, says St. Ambrose, "their punishment is that while they are erasing the words of truth from the Book of God, God is erasing their names from the Book of Life."

Brethren, ten days after the Ascension of Our Lord the Holy Ghost, as Christ had promised, descended on the Apostles. At the creation, the Spirit of God brooded over the waters and brought order out of chaos. During the intervening centuries, He, by virtue of His divinity, had filled with His presence the whole world. He had even vouchsafed at various times special manifestations of Himself, as when He appeared to the wandering Israelites as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, or hovered as a dove over Christ in the Jordan, or passed like a breath from Christ to His Apostles, or in mortal guise chanted a psalm before Eliseus, or instructed the centurion Cornelius, or in silence overshadowed the Virgin. But on that first Pentecost Day, His coming meant more than all these—He came then to renew in very truth the face of the earth, and to remain with men all days to the end of time. Since the Ascension the Apostles had been hiding in Jerusalem through fear of the Jews, and being all together,

"suddenly there came a sound, as of a mighty wind, and there appeared parted tongues, as it were of fire, which alighted upon every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with divers tongues." The manner of His coming is significant of knowledge, zeal, the gift of tongues and the power of miracles, symbolized respectively in the brightness and heat and form of the falling fire, and in the rushing sound of its descent. The Apostles as the preachers of the new dispensation, had especial need of these four gifts. An unlettered preacher is a blind man leading the blind, and both are sure to fall into the pit. A minister, learned, but without zeal or virtue, either abandons his flock like the hireling, or scatters them by the scandal of his life. How necessary in a preacher is the gift of speech you know full well—you on whom we inflict our clumsy harangues. And, lastly, the power of miracles is God's seal on the credentials of His earthly ambassadors. Prior to the foundation of the Christian Church, the Synagogue had been His duly accredited representative, so that it was of the first importance that the authority of the Apostles should be so plainly certified to as to command the respect and submission of both Jews and Gentiles. But the same necessity for miracle-working does not exist to-day, except, perhaps, on the part of those who are continually introducing new forms of belief. To ask the Church to prove her divinity by miracles at this late day is unreasonable, especially in those individuals and nations who have

eagerly accepted that manifestly fraudulent Christianity, Protestantism.

Brethren, the knowledge communicated by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles comprised all the mysteries and truths of our faith. "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands," and from a study of visible things philosophy came to a knowledge of the invisible things of God. But the Lord leads the just man by direct ways and shows him the kingdom of God, and hence it was that through the influence of the Holy Ghost more wisdom was infused into the Apostles in a moment than all the philosophers laboriously and for centuries had been able to acquire. Natural truths, however, did not most probably constitute a part of these revelations, except indeed such as were necessary in the accomplishment of their apostolic mission, for, says St. Augustine, "the Spirit designed to make them not mathematicians, but Christians." The Apostles had said to Christ: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how are we to learn the way?" and through the coming of the Paraclete, He, as He promised, sufficiently enlightened them so that they might be able "to give knowledge of salvation to His people unto the remission of their sins."

The second gift was the gift of tongues. On that first Pentecost Day, there were in Jerusalem representatives of all civilized peoples, and each was amazed at hearing the Apostles address him in his native tongue. Not that they spoke Greek, for ex-

ample, more fluently than Demosthenes, or more polished Latin than Cicero, but they received the faculty of speaking the languages as they are ordinarily spoken, and as though they were their own, and that, too, in a moment. "Blessed is the man whom Thou teachest, O Lord, for verily Thy tongue is as the pen of a writer writing rapidly!" Whether there be question of the imparting of truth or the learning of a language, there is a wider difference between our method and God's than there is between the work of a pen and of a printing-press. Our process is slow and labored and our results defective, but the works of the Lord are perfect.

Thirdly, they received the power of miracles. By a word of his mouth, we are told, St. Peter slew Ananias and Saphira for their duplicity, and not only did he raise Tabitha from the dead, but even by the touch of his shadow he cured all manner of diseases. So, too, the other Apostles. Nevertheless, they indulged in no arbitrary exercise of this power, but only in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit. St. Paul, for instance, did not use his miraculous power for the healing of his own wounds, and in writing to Timothy, he counsels him to have recourse to natural remedies; not to drink water, but to use a little wine for his stomach's sake and his manifold infirmities.

Brethren, lastly, and most of all, the Holy Ghost infused into the Apostles such intense zeal and love for God and humanity that, when their time came, not one of them hesitated to give the ultimate proof

of charity by laying down his life for God and the brethren. Previous to His coming they had been weak and timid men; Peter had trembled at the voice of a maid and thrice denied his Lord, and the whole band was hiding for fear of the Jews, but now, as the plastic clay is by fire hardened into enduring brick, so the Apostles by the fire of divine love were made suitable to be the foundations of the Church of God. They who before shrank from ridicule and insult, now rejoiced that they were found worthy to suffer persecution and torture and death for the name of Jesus.

Brethren, it matters little whether or not we be learned, whether or not we be eloquent, whether or not we be miracle-workers, but it is a matter of supreme importance that we possess a goodly measure of love for God and our neighbor. "God is love," says St. John, and his meaning is that charity is of all the most characteristic gift of the Holy Ghost, the most infallible indication of His indwelling presence, the stem which produces and supports all the other gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost. But how are we to know whether or not we possess this precious gift? Brethren, the natural outcome of charity is an ideal Christian life, but probably as sure indications as any other of its presence are fortitude and patience. "True charity casteth out fear," as we have seen it do in the case of the Apostles. When you saw your neighbor offending against the laws of his conscience and of God, did you admonish him? No. Why not? Because you feared his displeasure. Ah!

but true charity casteth out fear. How often do you approach the sacraments? Once a year. How often do you eat? Three or four times a day. But why not refresh your starving soul more frequently? Afraid lest men consider you effeminate or a hypocrite. Ah! but true charity casteth out fear. How many times did you refuse invitations to the theatre or the tavern; how often did you visit the widows and orphans to comfort them in their affliction? Seldom if ever. Why? For fear of being called mean or unmanly. Ah! but true charity casteth out fear. Again, charity is patient, beareth all things, endureth all things. Perhaps your health is poor, your home unhappy, your business not prosperous, are you resigned? Alas! how rare is patience! how rare is true charity! We bear the world's crosses uncomplainingly; we even voluntarily fast and pray and give alms, but beneath the tribulations sent us by God, we grumble and groan. Yet, "whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth," but we cannot, will not see it. Rejecting the doctor of our souls, we undertake to prescribe for ourselves, and in the end we find that he who is his own physician hath a fool for his patient. Brethren, may the Spirit of love come to you to-day; may He strengthen you to bear humbly and patiently the inevitable but saving trials of your earthly career, and may He impart to you the courage to do ever, and everywhere, your whole duty to yourself, your neighbor, and your God.

Trinity Sunday.

The Holy Trinity.

"*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"—Matt. xxviii. 19.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Plan of Church liturgy for year.
I. The Trinity: 1. Truth and error. 2. State of nature and under law. 3. Under gospel.
II. Benefits conferred: 1. By Father. 2. By Son. 3. By Holy Ghost.
III. Our return: 1. Salvation by faith. 2. Works. 3. Final reckoning.
Per.: Imitation of Blessed Trinity.

SERMON.

To-day, my dear Brethren, the Church celebrates the feast of the Most Holy Trinity. In Advent she glorified the Father for the merciful redemption she saw Him preparing for mankind; from Christmas to Easter she adored God the Son in His birth and sufferings and death, and last Sunday she sang the praises of God the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier and Saviour of mankind. To-day having, as it were, chanted a solo in honor of each divine person, she bids her children join one and all in a grand chorus of praise to the ever adorable Trinity.

That you may the more readily lend your voices to swell the chorus of praise, I will ask each of you to consider briefly, first, What is the Blessed Trinity? second, What has the Blessed Trinity done for me? third, What am I bound to do in return? In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

What do we mean by the Blessed Trinity? By the Blessed Trinity we mean one God in three divine persons. We agree with the Unitarian in saying that God, the infinite first cause and supreme Lord of all things must be one, for if there were two first causes, neither would be first, or if there were two infinite supreme beings both would be finite and subject to a higher third. Again we agree with the Trinitarians that God is three, because faith tells us so. But when the Trinitarians say "there are three Gods," or when the Unitarians say "there is only one person in God," we disagree with both, and stand halfway between the two and say "there is one God in three persons." For just as in myself there is a human nature which is common to me and to all men, and a personality which distinguishes me from all others, so in God there is one divine nature but three distinct personalities, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Oh, but you say, "I cannot see how a thing can be one and three at the same time, and so I do not believe your doctrine." Brethren, remember Our Lord's words: "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed." Faith is a belief in things unseen founded on the word of God, and without faith, especially in the Blessed Trinity, it is impossible to be saved. Now as well might we attempt to drain the sea drop by drop into the palm of the hand, as introduce an idea of the Trinity into our shallow brain. But is, therefore, that great mystery a lie? Is our feeble mind on a par with the infinite intelligence of God, the measure of transcendent truths

and divine mysteries? Will we refuse to accept on faith a truth which the voice of God asserts in Scripture and Tradition, which God's infallible Church teaches, and in the presence of which the sublime intelligence of an Augustine, an Aquinas, and even the angels themselves bend in lowly homage? We cannot prove this truth to be false; we have God's word for it that it is true, and therefore though we cannot understand, we believe and beg God to help our unbelief. In fact if we look around us we see that many of the things God has made bear His likeness in that they are at the same time one and three. A triangular tower is one of these, because as we view it from three different sides it is ever the same tower we behold. St. Patrick used the shamrock to illustrate the Trinity. As the Son proceeds from the Father and the Holy Ghost from both, so the blossom comes from the tree, and the fruit from tree and blossom. The brute beast is a complete being and in himself he contains two other distinct beings; his soul and his body. The soul of man which God made to His own image and likeness—that too, and in a special manner bears the impress of the Trinity, for while it is one soul, it possesses the three faculties of memory, understanding, and free will. It was precisely on account of this wonderful combination of unity and multiplicity in natural objects that men, even before the coming of Christ, were led to conclude some kind of a plurality in the Divinity. Hence, while the unlettered throng held to the doctrine of one God in nature and person, the Pagan philos-

ophers taught Pantheism, and the wise men of God, guided by divine inspiration, came to a knowledge of the mystery of the Trinity. But when Christ came He announced this truth in plain terms, and men began to see why God in creating said: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness." For Christ taught that Himself, the Father and the Spirit, though three, are still one; that He went to the Father and would send the Holy Ghost. He commanded men to be baptized in the name of God—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and finally He said, by John, "There are three in heaven who give testimony—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and they are one." So plain are these words that for every Christian, and more especially for every Catholic, the existence of a triune God must be a fact beyond dispute. Now it is one thing to know the existence of a truth, and it is another thing to be able to explain it. That I move my hand is certain, but how I move it, not all the philosophers that ever lived know or will be able to explain. Hence, that God is at the same time one in nature and threefold in person we are certain of, relying on the word of an infallible God and His infallible Church. But when we ask how this can be, we can only lift up our eyes to God and adore His incomprehensible perfections and exclaim with St. Paul: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!"

Brethren, the first and greatest object of our faith must ever be this great truth, that God exists;

that in Him there is only one nature, but three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and I know of no better way to strengthen our faith than to reflect what each person of the Trinity has done for us. What has God the Father done for us? "I have loved you," He says, "with an eternal love, and I have drawn you out of nothing." A million, a thousand, a hundred years ago what were we? Who thought of us? Were we not lost or forgotten among the millions and trillions of human possibilities? No; there was One who thought of us. We held a place in the eternal knowledge and love of the great Father of all, and when the time came He chose us and brought us into existence, leaving millions of others in their nothingness forever. With existence He bestowed on us every blessing which could make existence happy. The heavens and the glory thereof, the earth, and the sea and every member of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, all He created for us, for our use and for our enjoyment. Then, when He saw we would destroy ourselves by the abuse of the things He had given for our use, He so loved us as to give up His only-begotten Son to ransom us. And lest we should fall again He has surrounded us on all sides with safeguards—He has placed us in the true Church to imbibe her salutary doctrines, and with her sacraments to nourish our souls unto eternal life. "I have loved you with an eternal love." We are eternal beings, not only because we existed in God's knowledge and love from the beginning; not only be-

cause with the same fatherly affection He watches over and guards us all during this life, but because His love for us will endure forever in the next life. If we go to heaven we will see and enjoy Him forever. In purgatory, though He punish us, He will still love us, aye, and even in hell though He will hate our wickedness He will still love us with an aching, regretful, but withal an eternal love.

Secondly, God the Son—what has He done for us? Say, rather, what has He not done for us? He came down from the royal throne of His divinity, and stripping Himself of His princely robe, of His divine perfections, laid it on our shoulders and clothed Himself with our shabby, filthy humanity. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" in miserable poverty for thirty years. Then the charity of God the Son appeared in that He delivered Himself up for us—and having loved us He loved us unto the end. He said Himself in His Passion "even unto death," aye, even unto the death of the cross. The greatest favor that man can do for man; the strongest proof of the love of a brother for a brother, is for one to give up his life for his friend—but Our Lord and Saviour has done something greater still—He gave up His life for us while we were still His enemies. When dying He was not content that the infinite life He gave up should pass into and vivify all men past, present, and future, but He also left special graces to guard us from danger; the precious food of His body and blood to strengthen souls staggering under temptation; and the Sacrament of Penance to revive

them after the misfortune of having died in sin. Oh, surely the love of God the Son for us is not less than that of the Father, for while the Father's love for man knows no limit in duration—is eternal—the love of the Son knows no limit in intensity—it is infinite.

Lastly, God the Holy Ghost—what has He done for us? Oh, we can well exclaim with the Virgin: "He that is mighty hath done great things to us, and holy is His name." For what would it have profited us for the Father to have created us, for the Son to have redeemed us, unless the Holy Spirit of God had come to sanctify and save us? And come He did on Pentecost in the form of tongues of fire—of tongues to show He came to teach us all truth, and of fire, because He came to enkindle in men's hearts the fire of divine love. For the Holy Ghost is the love of the Father and Son, and since the Son became man, the infinite love of God embraces all mankind. Hence when the Son ascended into heaven He and the Father sent the Holy Ghost to men to vivify the spirit of His Church, to protect her doctrines from error and her morals free from corruption. Not only the Church in general, but each and every one of us in particular, experiences the effects and fruits of the Holy Ghost, for He tells us it is His delight to inhabit our souls. Every temptation we resist is resisted with His help, every good action we perform is done by His inspiration and assistance. He has come to us not for a time, but to stay—to enter our souls in the innocence of childhood—to ac-

company us all through life, encouraging us in the practice of virtue and again going down after us into the abyss of sin and dragging us back even from the brink of hell. In the ups and downs of life He is with us through it all, even to our last breath, for Christ promised to send the Paraclete, who would abide with us all days, even to the consummation of the world.

Brethren, we believe there are three persons in God and that the favors each has conferred on us are inestimable, but is that enough? The devils in hell believe, but what doth it profit them? Ah! what will it profit us to have known the Father, if we prove rebellious sons? To have known the Son, if, like another Cain, we murder by our vices, Christ, our Brother? To have known the Holy Ghost, if, like ingrates, we turn from Him to follow the demon of sin? Oh, it were ten thousand times better for us never to have known this truth, than after we have known it to neglect to conform our lives to the faith that is in us. Faith without good works is dead, aye, worse than dead, for it makes the sinner more responsible and consequently more guilty in the sight of God. Of him to whom much is given much shall be expected. "Have faith and fear not," is the cry of the whole Christian world outside the Catholic Church, but that is not the way of the Catholic Church. No, nor of Christ her Founder, for from Him she has received her commission not only to teach all nations the mystery of one God in three persons; not only to make known to them the merci-

ful works done by each person in our behalf—the works of creation, redemption and sanctification, but also to teach men to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. So there, in brief, is the whole system of man's salvation, the Trinity above directing all—God's Church and her ministers on earth teaching her children, by sermons and instructions, what they must believe, and showing them by example what they must do to be saved, and finally the great throng of God's people, bound to accept God's revealed truths, and so shape their lives in accordance with them, that they may one day be among the blessed who have both heard the word of God and kept it. Brethren, are we doing all this? Am I living the life and doing the work of a faithful minister of God? Are you doing your whole duties as children of God and heirs of heaven? Alas and alack, are we not each individually and all together one grand colossal spiritual failure, with only one consolation for the present, only one hope for the future—the thought that the Trinity loved us from the beginning, loves us now, and will continue to love us without end in eternity? But if the thought of God's infinite love and goodness to us fails to excite us to do something in honor of the Trinity and in return for the blessings they have bestowed on us, let this other thought sink deeply into our minds, that the day will infallibly come for you, aye, and for me too, when we shall stand in the presence of that Trinity to give an account of our stewardship—I, if I have faithfully by word and example taught Christ's

commandments; you, if you have conscientiously reduced to practice the truths which I have taught. Woe to you and woe to me in that terrible day, if during our lives we refused to bow our intelligences in simple faith before the mystery of the Trinity, or forgot the goodness of each divine person to us, or having admitted and believed these truths, failed to conform our lives thereto. Woe to us then if we have to confess to the Father that instead of loving and serving Him as our first beginning and our last end, we gave all our thoughts to and placed all our happiness in the creatures He intended to help rather than hinder us on the road of our earthly pilgrimage to heaven. Woe to us if we have to own to the Son that His incarnation, His lowly birth, and His humble life were for us all in vain; that His sacred body was bruised and His adorable blood shed only to make our guilt greater and our punishment more terrible. Woe to us then if we have to report to the Holy Ghost a neglect of all His inspirations, a contempt for His heavenly gifts, and a steady refusal to listen to His repeated warnings and invitations to return to repentance, and to God. For if such be our condition in the last day, we will then find that the day of mercy has given place to the night of wrath—that God the Father is as omnipotent in hell as in heaven; that God the Son is as all-wise in devising a hell of torture as He is in planning a heaven of delights; that the justice of God the Holy Ghost is as implacable as His mercy is infinite. "For they that shall believe and be baptized and keep My command-

ments shall be saved, but they who shall not believe shall be condemned."

Brethren, believe and do. Have a firm faith in this great mystery of three persons in one God, and a lively appreciation of the favors each has conferred upon you. But above all things see that your faith be reflected in your life. Try to imitate the all-powerful Father by doing all in your power for Him; try to imitate the Son who died for you by dying to the world for Him; try to imitate the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love, by doing all you do for God out of pure love. Then will the Trinity bestow on you its threefold blessing, the greatest of all blessings, the blessing I wish you all, this morning; that the Father may guard you with His paternal providence, that the Son may enlighten you always to know the way of salvation, and that the Holy Ghost may ever draw you nearer and nearer to Himself in the bonds of His eternal love.

Second Sunday After Pentecost.

THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

"*A certain man made a great supper and invited many.*"
—Luke xiv. 16.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Choicest gift. II. Scriptural figures. III. Comparisons.
I. Protestant unbelief: 1. Heresy. 2. Catholic doctrine. 3. Meaning of parable.
II. Doctrine proved: 1. Scripture. 2. Teaching and practice of Fathers. 3. Character of doctrine's friends and enemies.
III. Causes of infidelity: 1. Pride and avarice. 2. Conceit. 3. Sensuality.
Per.: Exhortation to approach Lord's banquet-board.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, God has endowed and enriched His Church with many and singular prerogatives, but the greatest of them all, the most precious gift she has or could have received from His hands, is the adorable Sacrament of the Lord's body and blood. Compared with that, all the ceremonies and sacrifices of the Old Law seem empty and valueless. "Beggarly elements," St. Paul calls them. "For if," he says, "the blood of goats and of oxen served to sanctify the defiled unto the cleansing of the flesh, how much more does the blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." As the shadow is to the reality, so was the Synagogue to the Christian Church, so the manna of the desert to the heavenly bread Christ gives, so the water that gushed forth from the rock stricken by Moses to the blood that flows from the Saviour's transfixed side. The

Holy Eucharist, by reason both of its intrinsic nature and its blessed effects on mankind, is unspeakably superior, not only to the Mosaic rites, but also to all the other sacraments of the New Law. Among them the Eucharist is what the seraphim are among angels, what the arch of heaven is to the heavenly bodies, what the sun is among luminaries, fire among elements, man among animals, the pine among trees, gold among metals, charity among virtues, and theology among sciences. No wonder the Church, in commemorating the institution of this Blessed Sacrament, arrays herself in joyous apparel and calls into play the full splendor of her ritual.

But alas, Brethren, short of heaven there is no joy undimmed by some small sorrow, and the one spot on our feast of charity is that so many Christians persistently deny the real presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist. Christ's words, "This is My body," are interpreted by the entire Protestant world to mean: "This signifies My body." In their creed the Eucharist is a mere figure, in dignity less than the Jewish Passover, and in usefulness inferior to the manna. But the Catholic Church, by her choice of this passage for to-day's gospel, clearly indicates her belief. "A certain man made a great supper and invited many." Who that man but God? What that supper but the Eucharist? Who the invited but all mankind? A great supper, indeed, is the Eucharist, for whereas it has been partaken of throughout the whole world and for ages by millions and billions of human beings whose spiritual

hunger has been thereby abundantly appeased, its bounty is still as exhaustless as that of the loaves and fishes which Christ blessed and brake and gave to the multitude. In the richness of its delicacies it infinitely surpasses all other banquets, for it is He Himself who is the living Bread that came down from heaven, having in Himself all sweetness.

Brethren, how any one at all conversant with the New Testament can in good faith deny Christ's real presence in the Eucharist is wholly unintelligible. In their account of the Last Supper, the evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, record Christ's words when He handed the bread to His Apostles: "Take ye; this is My body." These are plain words, and to understand or explain them in a metaphorical sense is to do violence to all the known rules of interpretation. For the wording of a law or decree should not be ambiguous, but so simple and direct that all may easily understand and obey. Now, Our Lord, when He instituted the Blessed Eucharist, decreed also that His disciples should perpetuate that miracle. "Do this," He says, "in commemoration of Me." Either, therefore, we must conclude that Christ the Lord God was the most inexpert of lawgivers, or else that His words must be taken in their absolutely literal sense. Why, see at what pains lawyers are, when drawing up a will, to express beyond the shadow of a doubt the testator's wishes, and thus to avert possible contention among the legatees. And was Christ, in making His last will and testament, less solicitous for His

Church? "This," He says, "is My blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto the remission of their sins." Did He mock her with metaphors, and leave her the shadow for the reality? Did He purposely sow in her the seeds of dissension for all time—He who said: "My peace I leave you; My peace I give you"? Certainly, if some wealthy man were to promise to leave you a splendid palace or a vast heap of golden coin, and afterwards you discovered that his promise was but a figure of speech, and your legacy but a photograph of the hoped-for riches, you might well feel that you had been deceived and derided. And if Christ, when He said: "The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world," meant not His real body, but bread which figuratively might be called His flesh, He would have been guilty of having deliberately deceived mankind—He who can neither deceive nor be deceived—He who is truth and justice and goodness itself. "This," He says in unmistakable terms, "this is My body; this is My blood," and "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed."

Brethren, a favorite argument of unbelievers against the real presence is, that the primitive Christian Church knew nothing of such a doctrine, for, say they, it is not found in the writings of the Fathers of the early centuries. That this assertion is in a measure true is owing partly to the excessive veneration of the early Christians for the Blessed Eucharist, and partly to the uniformity and universality of their belief in the real presence. Mindful of the double

admonition, that it is good to conceal the king's secret, and that pearls are not to be cast before swine, the primitive Christians instituted what they called the "Discipline of the Secret," according to which no sacrament, and least of all the Eucharist, was to be administered or discussed in the presence of Pagans. Nevertheless, when occasion demanded, we find even the earliest Fathers using this doctrine as a first and universally accepted principle of belief whereon to base their proofs of other dogmas or their refutations of heresy. St. Irenæus, for example, book 4, chapter 4, convicts Valentine and his followers of inconsistency in that, while admitting that Christ changed bread into His body, they denied His divinity and His power to make all things out of nothing. St. Cyril, also, arguing against the same heretics, asserts the capability of our bodies for immortality on the ground that in holy communion they are so assimilated to the incorruptible body of Christ that, even as the Eucharist consists of corruptible accidents and an incorruptible substance, so our bodies, corruptible by nature, are rendered by hope incorruptible. Three things are here assumed: first, that the consecration effects a real change; second, that corruptible bread becomes the incorruptible body of Christ; and third, that this belief was common alike to the faithful and to heretics. Without this threefold assumption the arguments of the Fathers would be valueless. Again, SS. Hilary and Cyril disprove the contention of the Arians that God the Father and Son are one not by nature but by

love, from the fact that in holy communion Christ's body is united to ours not by affection only but really and substantially. "The Father and I are one," says Christ, "and whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood, abides in Me and I in him." The basis of the argument is the same, viz., the common belief of all in the reality of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Again, St. Epiphanius declares that we should no more deny from appearances man's likeness to God than we should from lack of resemblance deny Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, "and," he adds, "whoever denies that, as He said, it is really He, falls from grace and hope of salvation." Finally, St. Augustine, book 3, chapter 10 on the Trinity, speaking of the earthly forms in which angels have deigned at times to appear to men, says, that although we cannot understand how those forms were assumed, we still believe most firmly on the word of God in Holy Writ that angels they were; just as for the same reason, though we cannot comprehend the manner of His presence, we still are certain that Christ is really and substantially in the Eucharist. The belief of the primitive Church, so clearly evidenced in the teaching of these Fathers, is further proven by their practice. Out of reverence for the Eucharist they received it fasting, as is attested by St. Augustine and Tertullian. "The utmost care was taken," says Origen, homily 13 on Exodus, "that no particle should fall to earth." It was preserved in golden vessels, and St. Victor reprobates the horrible sacrilege of the Arians in having trampled it

under foot, while St. Optatus relates how certain Donatists, in attempting to feed it to the dogs, were torn in pieces by the infuriated animals. According to St. Basil, to pray to the Eucharist was deemed right and proper, and not to pray to it was sinful, and St. Augustine testifies that the charge of having worshipped Ceres and Bacchus brought by the Pagans against the Christians was due to the adoration paid by the latter to the body and blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. Nothing but belief in the real presence could justify, or can explain such practices. If the primitive Church held that the consecrated species still continued to be mere bread and mere wine, it should have chosen water used for baptizing as a far more sacred object of veneration. But nowhere do we read of such a choice having been made. The Eucharist alone received the honor and adoration due exclusively to Christ and to God.

Brethren, if the Fathers of the early Church have little concerning a dogma which had not yet been called in question, the same cannot be said of the later defenders of the faith. In A.D. 1045, Berengarius first attacked the doctrine of the real presence, and thereafter we find it explicitly asserted by nine general Councils and copiously defended by all the Fathers. Now, is it reasonable to contend that that trinity of heretics, Berengarius, Wycliff, and Zwinglius, were in matters of faith a safer guide than the entire teaching body of the Church; that they alone represented the true Church of Christ, while

all the Councils and Fathers and writers and faithful who clung to the belief in the real presence had turned from the true faith to the rankest heresy and idolatry? If apostates and idolaters these latter were, how came it that they attained such eminent sanctity and wrought such stupendous miracles? How comes it that the histories of their opponents are stories of arrogance and self-seeking, or biographies of men who shocked the world with the scandal of their lives? This is heaven's own proof of the doctrine of the real presence, and if on the last day at our final judgment the impossible should occur, and God should arraign us Catholics on a charge of heresy and idolatry, we shall be able to answer boldly: "Not guilty." Not guilty, Lord, for Thou Thyself didst say: "This is My body; this is My blood." Thy great Apostle Paul taught us to discern in the Eucharist Thy body and Thy blood. At Thy bidding the priests of Thy Church continued to do as Thou hadst done, in commemoration of Thee. Thy saints proved this doctrine to us by Thy miracle-working power, and by the holiness of their lives. Not guilty, O Lord, not guilty, for if error there be, Thou Thyself hast misled and deceived us. Turn rather to our opponents and ask them why they doubted Thy words and abandoned Thy faith; why they allowed a few unworthy pastors to drive them from Thy Church, when Thou hadst said that such were to be obeyed but not imitated; why they preferred to follow Calvin and his fellow apostates rather than Thee, when Thou hadst commanded that if even an angel

from heaven were to teach other than Thou hadst taught, he should be anathema?

Brethren, the causes of defections from the faith and from the practices of religion are set forth in to-day's gospel. A certain man made a great supper and invited many. But they began all at once to make excuses, the first, because he had bought a farm and must go see it, another, because he had purchased five yoke of oxen and must go try them, and a third because he had married a wife; and each said: "I pray thee hold me excused." Pride and avarice and conceit and sensuality: these are the forces which keep men away from Church and the sacraments. How many individuals and families there are who, though when in humbler circumstances they were good Catholics, are now grown rich and have achieved a position in society and are ashamed of, and have abandoned, the faith of their fathers! History records that most of the great heresiarchs were men of inordinate ambition and vanity, who, because they could not attain the honors they considered their due within the Church, left her and sought them among her enemies. Ah! these proud, vain souls acquire a grand villa, it may be, and they must needs go out to see it, but the price they pay is excessive, for in exchange they give their priceless faith and their hope of one of the many mansions in their Father's house. Or perhaps to pride they add avarice, and are so absorbed in the game of profit and loss that they have no time to listen to, much less to accept, the Lord's invitation. "Pray excuse me,"

say they, "I must needs go see the farm I have bought." Aye, go see it, feast thine eyes upon it, take mayhap thy last look at it, for neither thy riches nor thy glory shall descend with thee into the grave. Poor souls; the devil deals with them as the hunter does with his hounds. When the game breaks cover he shows it to his dogs and cheers them on, but no sooner have they brought it down than he snatches it from them and plies the heavy lash. So is it with worldlings in their race for riches and honors; no sooner are they attained than death steps in and bids that all be dropped—then woe to him who is not rich with God. How differently God deals with men, checking them all through life with warnings such as: "Be not solicitous," and "Blessed are the humble," and at last compensating their self-denial ten thousandfold in the words: "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

Brethren, another class of persons who decline the invitation to the Eucharistic banquet are those who, wise in their own conceits, reject as false whatever cannot be explored with their five senses. The consecrated species still appear mere bread and wine, therefore, say they, such they are, and therefore, also, we pray you hold us excused. Their five senses, each really a pair, are their five yoke of oxen to which they are so devoted, which they are so proud of and so anxious to exercise, that with them the Lord's summons is of no avail. What a pitiable conceit to suppose that the ineffable nature and unsearchable ways of God can be comprehended by a

human mind, whose powers of understanding do not transcend even the nature of a fly! When a heretic named Eunomius boasted of having penetrated with his mind's eye the divine essence, St. Basil, to show the absurdity of his contention, sent him twenty-five questions on insect life, not one of which he was able to answer. For God, to be God, is necessarily incomprehensible, but a truth for which we have His word, is just as necessarily infallible.

Finally, the sensual have no time or appetite for the Lord's Supper. "I have married a wife," says such a one, "and therefore I cannot come." These are they who live according to the flesh, whose highest dream of happiness is carnal pleasure, who so receive even holy matrimony as to shut out God from their minds, and to give themselves to their lust as the horse or the mule. These are they over whom the devil prevails, and who reject the proffered invitation because its acceptance would run counter to their vices. "Amen, I say to you," saith the Lord, "that none of these men, these proud and worldly or self-wise or carnal men, that were called shall taste of My supper." For, sooner or later they will knock at the Lord's door and beg to be admitted to His nuptial feast, but He will answer: "Amen, I know you not. All through your day of life I held out My hands to you while you disbelieved and contradicted Me, and now I pray you hold Me excused." Then will He send His servants, His angels, into the highways and byways, to the neglected and the blamelessly ignorant, and many shall come from the east

and the west and shall sit down to the Lord's banquet whence many of His ungrateful children shall have been cast out. The poor shall be there; that is, the humble, the unworldly, the poor in spirit. The blind shall be there; that is, those who though they saw not Christ in the Eucharist still believed Him to be present. The feeble and the lame shall be there, viz., those who by the spirit mortified the deeds of the flesh, believing it better to enter into life blind and maimed rather than to be cast with all their members into unquenchable fire. Like the Patriarch Jacob they wrestle all through the night of time with the Lord and, though they come out of the contest broken and lame, still they attain the blessing of God and achieve their souls' salvation.

Brethren, let it not be said that Christ instituted for you in vain the Sacrament of His love. Let it not appear as though the Church was obliged to force you to that heavenly banquet by her holy commandment. Come to it rather with strong faith and eager love and deep gratitude, that the body and blood of the Lord may be for you indeed a remedy unto the remission of your sins and an earnest of your future entrance into life everlasting.

Third Sunday After Pentecost.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

"What man hath a hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost?"—Luke xv. 4.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Charity Sunday. II. Parabolic crescendo. III. Love human and divine.
I. Charity: 1. First essential. 2. Hope and consolation. 3. Christianity's origin.
II. Loving heart: 1. Light and heat. 2. Food and drink. 3. Clothing and wealth.
III. Sacred Heart: 1. Model. 2. John on Jesus' breast. 3. Love of men for Jesus.
Per.: 1. Gift of God. 2. Keep Commandments. 3. Worship Sacred Heart.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, to-day might very appropriately be styled Charity Sunday. The Gospel theme is charity, and the week's devotion has been the adoration of the body of the Lord—the bond of charity, and the worship of the Sacred Heart—the symbol and the source of love. As a feast, it is religion's very own, for religion is charity, and its most appropriate emblem the Sacred Heart. "Charity," says St. Paul, "is patient, charity is kind, charity is not provoked to anger, but beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and the Sacred Heart is charity incarnate. It yearns after the sinner as did the father for his prodigal son, and receives him returning with as much joy as though the recovery of that one child were the consummation of all its desires.

Not content with that, it seeks him out, as the widow the lost coin, with all the invincible constancy of a woman's love. Nay more, like the shepherd, leaving all else behind, it goes after him into the very desert of sin, and brings him back rejoicing. The Scribes and Pharisees took umbrage at seeing Our Lord consorting with publicans and sinners. Alas! what a significant contrast between divine and human charity; between the heart of man and the heart of God!

Brethren, the prophet Samuel tells us that in forming an estimate of a man's moral worth, the Lord judgeth not as a man judgeth, for men looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. Mind and heart, faith and love—both are essential elements in religion, for, as St. Augustine says, "the worship of the mind should be strictly commensurate with that of the heart." Still, in the ideal Christian, more important even than a believing mind is a loving heart. According to St. Paul, love is first, for "faith," he says, "worketh through love." To love is the first commandment—the sum of them all: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all the powers of thy being, and thy neighbor as thyself for the love of God." Christ's most striking characteristic was His love for all sorts and conditions of men. As we read to-day, He ate and drank with them, becoming all things to all; He comforted and cured them; He died for them. And His teaching was the gospel of love. "This is My commandment," He says, "that you love one another. By

this shall all men know you for My disciples, that you love one another." This same gospel of love, His disciples after Him taught. St. John the Evangelist, when too old and feeble to preach, was wont to sit before the people and repeat over and over: "Little children, love one another." When asked why he always said the same words, he replied: "Because this is the commandment of the Lord, which, if fulfilled, will suffice." St. Paul's first address to the Corinthians goes still deeper into the matter. What, he asks, is the most eloquent orator with a heart devoid of love? A sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. A monstrosity, deaf and yet not mute, a milestone ever pointing heavenward but never going there, a round of blank cartridge making much noise but doing little execution among the enemy. And if, he adds, my mind were possessed of all knowledge and of faith that could move mountains, yet were I nothing without a loving heart. Yea, he continues, were I to distribute millions among the poor and die a martyr's death, yet would I be nothing without love. Therefore, he concludes, so persuaded am I that the heart is the prime factor in religion that no created power, not even death itself, shall ever move me from the love of God.

Brethren, as time goes on the Christian world is coming round more and more to Paul's way of thinking. In the past, when the Church was struggling for existence, a docile mind was the Christian's first requisite, but since then religion has penetrated deeper into men and centred in their hearts. The

age of dogmatism is past, and to-day is the era of love and benevolence. To preach to a sinner, even to convince him, is little gained, but do him an act of kindness through love of God and immediately you persuade him into virtuous action. For man's soul, illumined merely by the mind, is like a bright midwinter day, cold and unproductive; warmed by the heart, it resembles a lively summer scene, rich and fruitful. Such fruit indeed is being daily produced by this latest phase of Christianity, this religion of the heart, that to-day it is the basis of the Church's fondest hopes and sweetest consolation. See the immense throng of our separated brethren, what sacrifices they endure for Christ's sake, their boundless charity to the poor and ignorant at home and abroad, their ever-ready sympathy with the ills of suffering humanity. Whence comes the undeniable goodness of these people? Whence their success? They succeed because theirs is a religion entirely of the heart which suits the spirit of the age. Have they the true faith? They lack, alas! one half of it, their minds being darkened by heresy, but they possess, thank God! the other and more essential half—they have a Christlike spirit of love in their hearts. The Church, I say, is consoled and rejoices, for she foresees salvation for the majority of even her erring children, remembering that charity covereth a multitude of sins, and that the Lord judgeth not as man judgeth, for the Lord looketh on the heart. The Church rejoices again because in this religion of the heart she sees begun a solution of those

problems that perplex society—problems of labor and capital, of the extremely rich and extremely poor, of the governing and the governed—problems, all of which must inevitably yield before the doctrine of Christian Socialism, the doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The Church rejoices again and most of all, because in this religion of the heart she sees the possibility of at last laying aside doctrinal disputes, and gathering the scattered flocks of the Christian world into one fold under one shepherd. Physiologists tell us that in the generation of a human being the heart is the first organ perfected, around which and by which the other members cluster and develop. Christianity, therefore, originated in the Sacred Heart, wherein the hypostatic union was accomplished. And since the record of that heart, from its first pulsation in the Virgin's womb to its last flutter on the cross was a story of love, so Christianity, to be true to its origin and its mission, must eventually be a law of love—a religion of the heart.

Brethren, I would that I might preach a worthy eulogy of the noble-hearted man! Of a good heart may be quoted the words of wisdom, that together with it come all good things. You may say of a man: "He is rich, he is wise, he is virtuous," even, and still, little have you said in his favor, but say of him: "He hath a good heart" and you have given him all praise. Dives the heartless is like a beautiful apple whose core is full of worms, but the loving Lazarus, after the fire of tribulation, resembles the roasted apple,

homely to look upon, but rich and sweet within. For lack of love Dives becomes the beggar, but Lazarus in love alone finds a substitute for all his needs. And love is the Christian's most precious possession —his life. "God is love," says St. John; and elsewhere Christ says of Himself: "I am the life." This sentiment of the heart is the life of our life, the soul of our soul, "because," adds St. John, "whoever loves not remains in death." Now, it is not the dead but the living who praise the Lord; the body of Christ is the food not of the dead but of the living, and hence these and the other functions of religion can be fitly exercised only by him who lives by love. Without charity even the coördinate virtues are as dead as the members of the body without the soul. As medicines are stimulated into action by the body's natural heat, so the spiritual medicines of religion prove efficient only when the subject has a warm heart. Hence St. James's meaning when he says: "Faith without works [of love] is dead." Not that it ceases to be faith, but that it is to live faith what the stagnant pool is to the running stream. Aristotle says that human perfection consists in the exercise of the highest virtue, and of all virtues St. Paul assures us charity or love is the highest, the bond of perfection. Hence love is the very life of the perfect man. In the words of St. Irenæus: "The perfect man is made up of body and soul and heart."

Next to life man's greatest need is heat, and what heat is to the body, love is to the soul. God, who is

love, is called by St. John "a consuming fire"; the Holy Ghost came in tongues of fire; and we often beg Him to enkindle in us the fire of divine love. Christ came to cast fire on the earth, and He shows us how, in the two disciples of Emmaus who exclaimed: "Were not our hearts burning within us whilst He expounded the Scriptures!" A good heart is heat not only to the dead but also to the sin-frozen, thawing out the Lord's vineyard and starting up the fonts of human sympathy. Its tendency, like fire, is ever upwards, drawing all things with it. Human nature clings to the earth like the mists before the dawn, but when the incarnate love of the Son of Justice rises, shines on them and is exalted from the earth, He draws all to Himself. This explains the wondrous constancy of the early saints and martyrs, whose onward march after Christ was as invincible as a mighty conflagration. This explains that fire that so filled the heart of St. Francis of Assisi that it burst through his hands and feet and side. This explains the patience of all good Christians under cold and hunger and privations, because they have the heat of the love of Christ in their hearts. For, mind you, love and fire differ in this that whereas fire is fomented by oil and extinguished by water, love on the contrary is diminished by oil, that is, luxury, and augmented by water, that is, privation, according to the Psalmist: "Many waters could not extinguish charity." And as fire separates the rust from the metal, so love removes sin from the sinner and the just from the wicked, according to Christ's words:

"By this shall all men know you for My disciples, that you love one another."

Charity, again, is food for the hungry and drink for the thirsty. Christ, the incarnate love, says of Himself: "I am the Bread of life; he that eateth of Me shall never hunger and he that drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst again." Love is that stream that the Apocalypse describes as flowing from the throne of God, slaking the soul's innate thirst for heaven, uniting the individual particles of humanity into one solid mass, and raising them on its bosom to its own level, the throne of God.

Again, charity is clothing for the naked, for, as the Apostle Peter says: "Charity covereth a multitude of sins." Charity is the nuptial garment rich enough to be worn at the wedding-feast of even the King of kings, and ample enough in its folds to hide from view the moral deformities of many an unfortunate brother. A garment as light as air, but as strong as death, is the love of God and humanity. Said Our Lord to His disciples: "Wait ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high." And when the Spirit of love, the Holy Ghost, did come upon them, those previously timid Apostles, as though now clothed in invincible armor, went bravely forth to battle for the faith and to die in the cause.

Finally, a good heart is a treasure such that the possessor of it, be he ever so poor, is rich indeed. They are woefully mistaken who put forth mighty

efforts and bear untold privations for worldly ends, and neglect to cultivate the love of God and their neighbor. They cull life's flowers but lose its fruits; they fish the world through and dine well on their catch, but they fling back the pearls of great price the shells contain. Faith, hope, humility, and the other virtues are as so many coins wherewith we purchase heaven. But charity alone is golden, and, as only gold is currency in heaven, we must pay our entrance fee in love or in some baser metal washed in the gold of charity. It must be a coin, too, that has the genuine ring to it—coined in the mint of a heart that loves not in word and tongue alone, but in deed and in truth.

Brethren, this is the month and Friday was the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus—that heart wherein human love and love divine met and mingled and became one. That is our model, that is the central fire from which each and every one of us should enkindle the flames of the love of God and humanity in the sanctuaries of our own hearts In all religion there is no more significant picture than that of the Evangelist John at the Last Supper reclining his head on the breast of the Saviour. It indicates to us the source of all good things. It interprets Christ's words: "Whoever loves Me, dwells in Me and I in him," for if we have a Christlike love in our hearts we need no more—we dwell in a celestial paradise surrounded with every luxury, with the King of kings for our guest. Nay more, be we ever so wretched, ever so friendless, ever so sinful, we can

feel that one great heart throbs for us with the unreasoning love of a mother for her scapegrace boy, of a father for his prodigal son; searches after us as perseveringly as the woman after the lost groat, goes after us as the shepherd after the lost sheep, and brings us home exultingly. Christ's charity is the sunlight of the world. It shines impartially on the good and bad; as well as on those who close their eyes to the light as on those awake to grace. The merely human eye is dazzled with it, and appreciates it better from a study of its created reflection. Love alone can enkindle love. There was nothing attractive in Christ's surroundings or history—the manger, the cabin, the cross, persecution, death, and yet humanity answers with St. Peter: "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." The Apostles suffered and died for love, love inspired the Crusades, it was the love of Christ that sustained the martyrs amid their torments; it was the battle-cry of the Christian legions in their onset on the hordes of barbarism; it rent the fetters from the limbs of the slaves; it is food and drink for the missionary in the wilds of the wilderness; it is a shield for the gentle nun amid the horrors of the battlefield; it is the secret of every heroic sacrifice, the corner-stone of every institution of Christian charity; it is the love of Christ that with steady hand has built in modern society the noble edifice of fraternal love on the demolished ruins of selfish interest. We can best appreciate the love of the Sacred Heart for men from the love of men for the Sacred Heart. "I came," says Christ, "to cast

fire upon the earth;" and what must have been the latent intensity of that fire that could enkindle and sustain such a mighty conflagration!

Brethren, you will ask me what this love is, and how you are to know whether you possess it or not. Love of Jesus is never a product of our own industry. It is a garment, so precious that it can be woven only by the hand of God Himself. It is a delicate tropical plant, which will not flourish in the frigid climate of our hearts unless planted therein and nourished by the celestial gardener. But it is ours to coöperate, not in word alone, not in sentiment nor in tearful emotion, but in an honest and persevering effort to do the will of God in deed and in truth. "If any man loves Me," says Our Lord, "he will keep My commandments." "Love God above all things and thy neighbor as thyself" is an epitome of the Decalogue, and since, in the Sacred Heart, God and humanity are inseparably blended, therefore the love and the imitation of the Sacred Heart is the whole law and the prophets. This devotion is the surest mark of predestination; it is peculiarly the devotion of the saints, for by it they are made participants of the divine nature here and hereafter. "If any man love Me," says Christ, "My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him here, and we will manifest ourselves to him hereafter in the happy kingdom of the blessed."

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost.

THE CHRISTIAN APOSTOLATE.

"And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men."—Luke v. 10.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. The fishermen. II. The fisher of men. III. God's call.
I. Preparation: 1. Altar-boy. 2. God no respecter of persons. 3. Julian's blasphemy.
II. Call: 1. Industry and self-sacrifice. 2. Hearing and preaching. 3. Net of God's word.
III. Response: 1. Trials and consolations. 2. Double revelation. 3. Peter's astonishment.
Per.: 1. Priestly self-respect. 2. Reverence of laity. 3. Golden mean.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, the scene of to-day's Gospel is a beautiful one to contemplate. The night had been stormy, and the fishermen's labor had been consequently fruitless, but now the morning breaks calm and clear, and the fickle lake, easily lashed to fury and easily stilled, lies smooth and glassy beneath the newly risen sun. Long, quivering shadows are cast athwart the waters by the tall masts, the idle sails, and the weary, disheartened fishermen. Presently, down from Capharnaum comes Jesus, the crowd following and pressing round to hear His every word. Shading their eyes with their hands, the fishermen look shoreward, then work their boats closer in, where rising and falling on the gentle swell they pause to listen. Christ's eyes are on the people, and His words are addressed to them, but His heart is on the fisher-

men, for by and by, when crowded to the water's edge, He steps aboard the bark of Peter and makes it His pulpit, and then launching out into the deep He bids them let down their nets for that wondrous draught whereby He showed that He had come there expressly to call them to be His Apostles. No priest of God can read that passage without emotion, for it recalls that bright happy day when first Christ came to him and said: "Follow Me; for henceforth thou shalt be a fisher of men."

Brethren, a wonderful and a mysterious thing is a young man's call to the priesthood. From his earliest years he is unconsciously being prepared, as an altar boy perhaps, and the summons, at first vague and general, may take years to become distinct and unmistakable. Thus Andrew had long been a disciple of the Baptist, and though months previous to their present call, when John had pointed out the Lamb of God to him and his brother Peter, they had immediately followed Jesus, still it is only now that their vocation takes shape definite and final. Doubtless the immediate works of Jesus's hands, the miraculous loaves and fishes, and the wine of Cana were far superior to that produced by secondary causes; and doubtless, too, some special grace was vouchsafed those whom Jesus personally called and consecrated to His service, but still it is the self-same Christ that summons to-day young men to the self-same Apostolate. His voice is not heard, but just as through fishing He caught the fishermen, and by a star He led the astronomers or Magi, so through

some circumstance peculiar to each He draws him naturally, sweetly, and yet mightily. Some event, trivial it may be, but still deeply significant in the light God sheds on it, will open up God's will to him, even as the sight of Jesus preaching to the surging throngs upon the strand must have recalled to the fishermen God's promise to their father Abraham that his seed should be as the grains of sand upon the shore; must have made them reflect that the harvest indeed was plentiful but the laborers few. "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest," says Holy Writ, "to send laborers into His harvest," for a call to the priesthood is exclusively God's doing. Mary chooses the better part herself and Christ ratifies her choice, but to His Apostles He says: "It is I who choose you and not you who choose Me." Neither Peter the fisherman, nor Peter the disowner can turn to Christ unless Christ's glance first rest on him. And blessed be God that in distributing His favors Christ is impartial and no respecter of persons. James and John, we know, were own cousins to the Lord, yet Andrew and Peter's call preceded theirs. That Christ began by choosing a pair of brothers recalls God's choice of Moses and Aaron to liberate His people and seems to indicate the bond of brotherhood each neophyte enters into with his brother-priests. Again, neither wealth, nor influence, nor great abilities count for aught with Christ in His choice of subjects for His priesthood. One there was of great possessions whom He commanded to go, give all to the poor and coming follow Him, but

that young man's countenance fell and he sadly turned away. More frequently the call comes to the poor and humble and by such is it more generally and more readily accepted. The fishermen were rough and unlettered, as unpromising, seemingly, for any purposes of usefulness or beauty as the unhewn log of wood or the undressed block of marble, but out of the wood may be fashioned a thing of beauty, and within the marble may lie hid an angel. Julian, the apostate, was wont to sneeringly remark that Christ chose the ignorant as more gullible, and even among alumni of Catholic colleges you will sometimes hear the brighter men reproach the duller ones with having studied for the priesthood because no other path to success lay open to them. The charge is false and blasphemous. Not all of Christ's disciples were rude and uncultured. Nicodemus and Gamaliel and Nathanael were doctors of the law; Lazarus and Joseph of Arimathea were from the Judean nobility; Paul and Denis the Areopagite and the many Jewish priests, who, as we read in the Acts, embraced the faith, were all most learned men, and later history records that the greatest minds that ever graced this earth were priests of God. And does it not redound to God's greater glory that men so utterly unfit as were the fishermen should have suddenly become masters of wisdom and of eloquence, linguists versed in every known tongue, and stupendous wonder-workers? That God chose such feeble means wherewith to conquer Jewish bigotry and convert a Pagan world served the double purpose of illustrating His

omnipotence and saving the Apostles from vanity, for well might they say: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory." Aye, it served a further purpose still, viz., to show the emptiness of all the teachings of the Pagan philosophies, for God chose the weak things of the earth to overcome the strong, and the foolish to confound the wise.

Brethren, when once the call has come, how deep the change it works in the young man's soul! Life immediately takes on a serious aspect, for he realizes there is so much to be done for God, and so little time for its accomplishment. Thenceforth he must be a toiler life's night through after the model of the Galilean fishermen, and of the Saviour who walked by the sea, a fisher of men, and ceaselessly went about doing good. We rarely hear of His having sat down to rest, and if at all, it was to teach, as now in Peter's boat, or on the Mount, or by the well where He converted the Samaritan woman, and through her the entire city. Christ's "follow Me," therefore, is an invitation to a life of industry, of which He sets the pace. God gave commands of old, but men neglected or erred in keeping them, and then came Christ saying: "Follow Me," setting Himself as an example for our imitation, and even taking us in hand and guiding us, as the writing-master guides the hand of a beginner. Thus young men called of God gaze steadily on Christ and learn to follow Him. He gave up all, Himself included, in His quest for men, and so must they relinquish all, their home and family and friends and hopes of

worldly joys and wealth and honors, and take unto themselves their suffering Saviour to be their portion and their inheritance. They realize how steep the path to heaven is, what strides are necessary to keep pace with Christ, what numbers will depend on them for help; and they feel they cannot afford to be weighed down with worldly affections and things, and that he who loves these more than Christ is not worthy to be His disciple. The two essential parts of every priestly life are illustrated in to-day's Gospel. First, communion with God, to sit and listen to Jesus's words, and secondly, to launch out into the deep and let down the nets for a draught. "Follow Me," He says, "and I will make you fishers of men." The world is like a sea whose waters, seemingly clear and sweet, are nevertheless bitter to the taste and aggravate rather than slake men's thirst—sinners are like fish, cold, devoid of religious fervor, loving the darkness of the deep and its mud and carrion, having no eyes to see, nor ears to hear God's truth, nor spiritual hands or feet wherewith to extricate themselves, given to preying upon and selfishly devouring one another. And oh! how arduous and discouraging the fisherman's task; how often, when the fish is nearly caught, he suddenly slips back and plunges down again! There is a rival fisherman, too, the devil, who, though he baits his cruel hook with poisonous pleasure and wealth and honors, and though he tears and kills his catch, still, sad to say, finds many eager for his lure. But Christ's mode of fishing and that of His Apostles and priests is with

the net of the word of God. The wonderful complexity of natures in Christ, with their knots and difficulties, His gradual broadening out from a helpless babe to full Messiaship, His perforated body on the cross, and His reaching at His death from the highest heaven to the lowest hell, all proclaim that the Word made flesh is both the fisherman and the net whereby men's souls are gathered into the peaceful waters of God's heavenly preserves. Or, if you will, the preached and written word of God is the net, its doctrines the cords, slender but enduring, and bound indissolubly together as with knots by mysteries and miracles and divine commands; a net seemingly small at first, but when investigated and unfolded found large enough to encompass man's entire moral and intellectual world, reaching heaven with its promises and fathoming hell with its threats. Be the draught ever so great, the bark of Peter will not sink, nor will the net give way; "for," says the Lord, "though heaven and earth shall pass away, My words shall not pass away."

Brethren, when, as is related to-day, the miraculous draught of fish was hauled aboard, Peter in amazement flung himself at the Saviour's feet and cried: "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." If the priesthood has its trials, it also has its consolations. The night of fruitless toil may be long and wearisome, but God will take account of and reward the labor regardless of results. Through many tribulations one enters the kingdom of heaven, and especially so the priest; but if through all discourage-

ment he persevere, sooner or later, and perhaps when least expected, his consolation is sure to come. Peter and his fellow-fishermen doubtless deemed it madness after their unsuccessful night to look for a rich haul in the glare of the morning sun, and hence their amazement when, at Jesus's word, they let down the nets and took that wondrous draught. They were completely carried away by a sudden revulsion of feeling. It was a double revelation—of their unworthiness, and of Christ's infinite goodness, and Peter voiced the sentiment of all when he cried in the spirit of the centurion: "Lord, I am not worthy; depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." There is no priest who has not at times experienced all of that. He preached perhaps, and bid right eloquently for a soul or souls, and because Christ's promise of success was not fulfilled as promptly and as abundantly as in the case of Peter's first discourse, he felt despondent and discouraged. And then perchance it occurred to him to imitate Christ, who at twelve disputed with the doctors, and at thirty came down to the capacity of the vulgar throng, and so at Jesus's word and in a humbler and a better spirit he again let down the net and lo! the miraculous draught again; the people crowded him as they crowded Jesus, ever eager for preaching that really is the word of God. Then came the double revelation of sin within and God without, and he cried: "I am not worthy; depart from me, O Lord, and yet not so, O Lord; remain with me, for without Thee I can do nothing, but in Thee who

strengthenest me I can accomplish anything and everything. Let demons cry: 'Depart from us, Thou Son of God, what have we to do with Thee?' but I, unworthy as I am, will henceforth try to imitate the fishermen, who leaving all things, their homes and families, their boats and newly acquired wealth, aye, and renouncing even themselves, followed Thee thenceforth more closely still, even to suffering and to death."

Brethren, St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians of himself and his brother-priests, says: "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." Herein is contained a double admonition, one for priests as to how they should carry themselves, and another for the laity as to how they should esteem their priests. The Lord's anointed should never lose sight of the dignity of his sacred calling, nor of the rights and the duties that it involves. Christ's priesthood is as far superior to that of the Jews as are the truths and rites and ceremonies, the sacraments and the sacrifice of the New Law to that of the Old. No earthly dignity can compare with that of the Christian Apostolate. While the holy Bishop, St. Martin, was one day dining with the Emperor, the latter out of respect for his saintly guest passed him the royal goblet untasted, and the good Bishop, to assert the dignity of his office, not only accepted the honor himself but handed the cup to an humble priest, his secretary, as next in order of precedence. St. Ambrose, too, when the Emperor Theodosius would have seated himself in the

sanctuary, exclaimed: "Emperor, go forth and take thy place among the laity, for though thy ermine make thee an emperor, it does not make thee a priest." The priest, therefore, while ever remembering, on the one hand, that he is the servant of the servants of God, must never forget, on the other, that he is an "alter Christus," another Christ, that he is the salt of the earth, which if it lose its savor will be cast out and trampled upon by men; that he is, in a word, a minister of Christ and a dispenser of the mysteries of God. As such, too, he should be accounted of and reverenced by you of the laity. Christ said to His Apostles: "He that despiseth you, despiseth Me." Respect paid His priests is respect paid to Christ Himself, and be assured that as Peter lost nothing by tendering the use of his boat for Jesus's pulpit, nor the widow by supporting Elias, nor the Sunamitess by housing Eliseus, so whatever material aid or hospitality you may provide for His priests will be amply rewarded. Remember, too, that extremes are perilous, and that safety lies midway. Excessive regard for individual priests begot factions among the Corinthians, one saying, "I am Paul's," another, "I am Apollo's," and a third, "I belong to Cephas." But neither Paul is anything nor Apollo nor Cephas; they plant and water the faith, but of themselves they are nothing; as Christ's ministers they are one and in all things equal; but they and we are all of Christ, and Christ is of God who giveth the increase. "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory . . . but let

a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."

Fifth Sunday After Pentecost.

Holiness, Pharisaical and Christian.

"Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 20.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Fifth Commandment. II. History of incident. III. Division.
I. Scribes and Pharisees: 1. Exceptions. 2. Teaching. 3. Practice.
II. We: 1. Fraternal correction. 2. Three punishments. 3. Our sins and temptations.
III. Remedies: 1. Reconciliation. 2. No substitute. 3. Remember last end.
Per.: 1. The letter. 2. The spirit. 3. The means and reward.

SERMON.

"Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." In other words, my dear Brethren, unless you keep God's commandments in your thoughts and words as well as in your actions you shall not save your souls. In to-day's Gospel, our divine Lord preaches His disciples a little sermon on the fifth commandment. Last Sabbath, as He was teaching in the Synagogue at Jerusalem, a man with a withered hand came to Him to be cured. Now the Scribes and Pharisees watched if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath, that they might have an excuse for killing Him. But thinking to win their

hearts by an act of genuine kindness, and wishing, likewise, to relieve a suffering brother, our loving Saviour cured the withered hand in the sight of them all. Then were they filled with madness and clamored for His life, and they would certainly have taken it had He not escaped in the confusion and fled into a lonely mountain of Galilee. Thither His disciples followed Him, and there we find Him to-day, teaching them the true spirit of the fifth commandment, and warning them that unless they keep it better than the Scribes and Pharisees, they shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And what then is the fifth commandment? And how did the Scribes and Pharisees keep it? And how should we keep it? And what are the remedies for our sins against it? These, my brethren, are the questions Our Lord answers in to-day's Gospel.

Fifth, "Thou shalt not kill" are words familiar to you all. They do not forbid the soldier to slay his enemy in a just war, nor the citizen to kill his assailant in self-defence, nor the State to inflict capital punishment; but they do forbid suicide and wilful and unjust murder. But is that all they forbid? Ask the Scribes and Pharisees, ancient or modern, and they will tell you, "Yes, that is all." But no, there must be something more, for Our Lord tells us that unless we keep it better than they we shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

How then did they keep it? The Scribes, as you know, were the doctors of the law—in great repute among the Jews for learning and sanctity. They

spent whole nights studying the books of Moses, and whole days instructing the people in their duties to God, their neighbor, and themselves. And what the Scribes taught, the Pharisees enforced by word and example. They gave liberal alms, prayed for hours daily, and fasted twice a week. Well might Christ's followers have regarded them as models of virtue—and yet they were anything but models. For their teaching as well as their practice, though true to the letter, fell far short of the spirit of the law. With them "Thou shalt not kill," meant simply: "Thou shalt not forfeit the esteem of men, or risk a shameful death on the gallows by an open act of murder. Anger, hate, contempt, personal abuse—all these you may freely indulge, but he who actually kills and he only, shall be in danger of the judgment." Such was their teaching and such, too, their practice. They were rigid Sabbatarians, as we have seen, and, in general, great sticklers for the exact outward observance of God's laws, but within, as Christ tells us, they were full of rapine and iniquity. And hence, though they hated and despised and reviled Our Lord, they made no open attempt to kill Him, but only underhand, as if through zeal for the sanctification of the Sabbath. Thus did they keep the fifth commandment, and we, my friends, unless we keep it better than they, we shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

How then should we keep it? "But I say to you," says Our Lord, "that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and who-

soever shall say to his brother 'Raca' shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say 'Thou fool' shall be in danger of hell-fire." To observe the fifth commandment, therefore, it is not enough to keep our hands from our brother's throat. No, we must also avoid abusing him with our tongue, or desiring in our hearts to avenge on him real or imagined wrongs. True, there is nothing bad in an honest indignation at wrong-doing or a virtuous frown or a severe but timely reprimand, but if vengeance be our motive and the destruction, not of the offence but of the offender our object, we simply commit a mortal sin against the fifth commandment. And the more we allow anger to develop into hatred —and hatred into Raca, i.e., open contempt—and open contempt into such abuse as "thou fool"—and abuse into actual murder, the greater shall be our torture in hell for all eternity. For just as among the Jews there were three grades of capital punishment, (1) sentence of death with right of appeal in the lower court or judgment, (2) sentence of death without appeal in the higher court or council, (3) stoning at the stake without trial, by the mob, so also are there different degrees of torment in hell. But note the difference. In the Old Law the punishment was temporal, in the New it is eternal death; in the Old a skilful defence or renewed appeals could do much, in the New there is no defence, no appeal; in the Old, only downright murder was punishable by the judgment in this world, in the New the vengeful incur the judgment, sneerers the council, revilers

the stake, and actual murderers unparalleled torments in the next. Oh, as Christians, subjects of Christ's law, let us bring this truth well home to ourselves. Let not the example of others persuade us "Thou shalt not kill" means simply: "Thou shalt not murder." For there are in our midst those whose only God is Nature, and Nature's law their only religion, who, though they practise the bare letter, boast they are more peaceful citizens than we who profess the Christian spirit of this commandment. Well, if they are, thank God for it; but I fear much they are no better than Scribes and Pharisees. They do not *kill* their brother, it is true, but do they ever hate him or despise him or call him names? Charity bids us hope they do not, but duty demands that we look well into our own conduct. And what do we find? Downright murder? No, but secret jealousies, yes, and individual squabbles, and ill-feeling among neighbors, and bitter family feuds, and a thousand and one quarrels arising from differences of party, of nationality, or of religion. These, my brethren, are what we must avoid if we would keep well the fifth commandment. And to do this we must be constantly on our guard, for anger and hate are subtle vices and temptations are not rare. Over and above the innate selfishness, and pride, and general irritability of our nature, each of us has some specially sensitive point—some hobby. Now the devil loves a row and so, knowing our characters thoroughly, he often hides from us our own unchristian treatment of others, and makes their most inno-

cent actions appear to us insulting or injurious. Then anger fills the mind and clouds the reason; then comes the muttering of suppressed passion; then flashes out the vile word or murderous action—and then? Alas! one soul, perhaps two, stripped of all their graces—blighted—dead. We must be on our guard, I repeat, for with us such temptations are very, very common. Here we are, a mixed people, differing widely in national, political, and religious prejudices, all trying to better our own condition and each bent on getting ahead of his neighbor. The friction is too intense not to strike fire occasionally. The child at school has his competitors, the young man or woman in the world finds a rival at every step, and the old people—well they, too, sometimes forget all men are brothers. Poor fifth commandment! Few of us ever give it a thought; and still fewer but break it often and grievously. Look well to it, my friends, for if we are at variance with one another, we are as the Scribes and Pharisees of old—murderers in the sight of God. "Whosoever hateth his brother," says St. John, "is a murderer, and a murderer, you know, hath not eternal life abiding in him." Uncontrolled anger, therefore, and habitual hate and any venting of them whatsoever by sign, word, or deed—all are sins of murder against the fifth commandment. These are the sins Christ wants us to avoid or correct. These are the sins we must correct if we would keep this commandment better than the Scribes and Pharisees, and so enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And now, what are the remedies for these sins? Our Lord shows us by word and example. "If, therefore," He says, "thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then, coming, thou shalt offer thy gift." If you are at war with your neighbor, through your own fault, your first and greatest duty is to go to him and apologize. But, you say, it is all his fault. Even so, go to him and be reconciled. But a silent coolness is the best preserver of the peace? No, in your spiteful heart you feel there is no peace. You call a bitter taunt fraternal correction, but why then are you ashamed to look your brother in the face? You pick his character to pieces and find an accusation against him even in his best actions. The Pharisees did the same to Our Lord and are lost accordingly. Now you do not wish to be Pharisees, but good Christians, true followers of Him who said: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that persecute you." Go, therefore, to your enemy at once, at least in spirit and if possible in person, and take him by the hand and beg him, for God's sake and your own peace here and happiness hereafter, to forget and forgive. But what if he refuse? No matter, you have done your duty. Our Lord knew well He never would win over the Scribes and Pharisees, but still He tried, and He expects the same of you. But will not something else do just as well, a rigorous fast or a more generous alms? No,

the Pharisees tried that and failed. You may pray as much as they did, but God will not hear you until you have become reconciled. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them their trespasses against us," that is the prayer Our Lord Himself taught us. You may go to confession, but what is the use if you hate the man on the other side of the confessional? You may go to communion, but it is an empty ceremony if the man at your side is your enemy. The beautiful custom among the early Christians of exchanging the kiss of peace before receiving, would be sufficient proof, if proof were needed, that to be friends with God we must first be friends with one another. God is not a two-faced go-between, that can equally love and forgive you and your enemy. "Forgive thy neighbor," He says in Holy Writ, "if he hath hurt thee, and then shall thy sins be forgiven thee when thou prayest." And the Holy Ghost adds: "Remember thy last things and let enmity cease." In other words, think of the hour of your death and hasten to be reconciled, for death may come at any moment and usher your unforgiving soul into the presence of God to crave forgiveness for its own sins. As you hope for pardon, therefore, pardon your neighbor; be at peace with him here on earth if you would enjoy hereafter the blessed peace of the kingdom of heaven.

My dear brethren, carry away, I beg of you, and profit by the lesson of to-day's Gospel, which is briefly this: The fifth commandment says: "Thou shalt not kill;" the letter of this commandment is:

"Thou shalt not murder," and the punishment of those who keep the bare letter is exclusion from the kingdom of heaven. The spirit of this commandment is: Thou shalt avoid not only murder, but even the least approach to it, wherefore, guard well thy temper and thy tongue and, above all, settle thy differences with thy neighbor. The one means to be employed is an honest effort to live at peace with all mankind, and the reward of those who make such an effort—we have it promised in Our Lord's own words: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost.

The Indestructibility of the Church.

"*Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, and death shall no more have dominion over Him.*"—Rom. vi. 9.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: Indestructibility of Christ's material and mystical body.
I. Possibility: 1. Founded Church. 2. Free will. 3. License and liberty.
II. Fact proved from: 1. Figures, Isaias and Daniel. 2. Synagogue. 3. New Testament and end.
III. Inquiry a duty: 1. Invisibility. 2. Scandals. 3. Evidences.
Per.: 1. Faith at last day. 2. The remnant. 3. Exhortation to fidelity.

SERMON.

Brethren, St. Paul's denial of the possibility of death ever again obtaining dominion over Christ's material body is equally true of Christ's mystical

body, the Church. "You," says the Apostle, "are the body of Christ and members of member; and as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ." This bond of union, this identity of Christ with His Church, entails a corresponding indestructibility on her part, and justifies us in saying of her that having risen with Christ from the dead she dieth now no more and death shall no more have dominion over her.

Brethren, Christ's Church is indestructible. That Christ founded a Church every Christian must necessarily admit, and no fair-minded infidel can possibly deny. Many, however, contend that the Church's existence depending on our free will, not even Christ Himself could have foretold whether we should ever change, abandon, or destroy her. The Church dependent on our free will! God forbid. Or what is free will? Does it mean entire independence of God? It would be a curse rather than a blessing. Free will was not given to us that we might be able to choose between good and evil, or defeat the designs of an all-powerful God. The blessed in heaven, the angels, God even, cannot will evil for evil's sake, and yet they represent the highest, sublimest types of moral freedom. The essence of free will consists in the power to choose, not between good and evil, but between one good and another. Hence, if God in an excess of that mercy which surpasseth all understanding, restrains us from such deeds as the destruction of His Church, He

thwarts us not in the use but in the abuse of our liberty. Nor must we make our limited understanding the measure of God's omnipotence. "The power of God," says St. Augustine, "to move our free wills whither it pleaseth Him is greater than our own." God said of David: "Thou shalt be king," but were not the Israelites afterwards free in electing him? Christ came on earth to die for mankind, but did not the Jews crucify Him of their own accord? And if the Lord decreed that His Church should never change, never die, are we less free in sustaining her? No surely, for having all things present to Him in His eternity, and foreseeing and foreordaining that in every age a certain portion of humanity aided by His grace should preserve intact the visible body of His Church, the Saviour could well say of her in the words of the Psalmist: "Thou art ever the selfsame and thy years shall not fail."

But did Christ found an indestructible Church? Brethren, as well might one ask: Did He found a Church at all? For wherever in Holy Writ, be it in figure or prophecy or Gospel history, we read of the establishment of Christ's Church, we never fail to read also of her continuous and unchangeable existence. She is the tree of life of the New Law, whose leaves and blossoms shall never decay, and whose perennial fruit must nourish men's souls in the vigor and freshness of an eternal youth. The Royal Psalmist sings of her as the sworn covenant of God with His people, of which He shall never repent; as His throne on earth that shall never fall, as His kingdom

that shall never end. The prophet Isaias foretells the coming of the Prince of peace and immediately adds: "His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace. He shall sit upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and justice from henceforth and forever." Now who is this Prince of peace, and what is His kingdom? Who but Christ? "For," says St. Jerome, "so accurately has Isaias written of the Redeemer that he deserves the name of Evangelist rather than Prophet." Every Christmas Day, moreover, the universal Church proclaims the newborn Redeemer in these same words, and St. Matthew in the fourth chapter of his gospel quotes them as a prophecy fulfilled in the person of Christ. The Angel Gabriel's words in announcing Christ's coming were practically identical: "And the Lord God shall give Him the throne of David, His Father, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." At His birth an angel proclaimed: "Peace on earth to men of good will." Christ's first words to His disciples ever were: "Peace be to you," and His last, "My peace I leave you." Can we doubt, then, to whom these words apply, taught as we are by the Church, the inspired writers, the angels, and by Christ Himself, that He and He alone is the Prince of peace? And being the Prince of peace, His promised kingdom must be the Church, for that and that alone did Christ come to establish. She alone is on the earth, while not of the earth. But such precisely is the nature of Christ's kingdom, for the prophet foretells: "He

shall sit upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom," and Christ before Pilate declared: "A King indeed am I, but My kingdom is not from hence." Now the kingdom of peace "can never end," and "there shall be no end of peace." For the same reason, therefore, that every kingdom divided against itself, shall be brought to destruction, the kingdom of peace, the Church of Christ, shall endure forever.

The prophet Daniel goes farther, and teaches that the true Church not only can never be overcome but must eventually conquer all her adversaries. "In those days," he writes, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and His kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people, and it shall break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms, and itself shall stand forever." Many admit indeed the perpetuity of the Christian faith, but of the original institution of Christ they find only the relics in the hundred and one sects of to-day. Let them remember that there can be only one true, and that wholly true, Church; that she can never be delivered up to her enemies; that she must break in pieces and consume all other churches; and that she herself shall stand forever.

Brethren, for a clearer insight into this truth, compare for a moment the Synagogue of the Old Law with the Church of the New. Some maintain that just as the Synagogue of God the Father was superseded by the Church of God the Son, so that of the Son must in time give way to the religion of God the Holy Ghost. The Synagogue having

been, as St. Paul says, "but the shadow and the figure of future things," it was bound to disappear on the coming of the reality. Its end was foretold by Jeremias saying: "Behold, the days shall come, saith the Lord, when I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel." But if this new covenant, this Church of Christ, must in turn cease, she, too, must be a figure of some future dispensation. Not so, however, for the prophet adds: "And this shall be the covenant I shall make with the house of Israel, I will give My law in their bowels, and write it in their hearts." The last heart-beat, then, of the last human being, shall be the signal for the Church's dissolution and resurrection. When the Church falls, then falls the human race and with it the world, for, concludes the prophet: "If these ordinances fail before Me, then also the seed of Israel shall fail, so as not to be a nation before Me forever." The Church is no figure, but a perfect reality. Says St. Paul: "The old priesthood indeed was set aside, because it brought nothing to perfection, but the new, being according to the order of Melchisedech, must last forever." Justly, therefore, does the Apostle conclude that: "Christ, for that He is eternal, hath an everlasting priesthood whereby He is able to save forever them that come to God by Him."

Brethren, that which the prophetic spirit foreshadowed in the Old Law, the positive will of Christ confirmed in the New. He represents His Church as a field of cockle and good wheat, not to be separated till the great harvest-time—the end of the world; as

a vineyard whose laborers are not to be paid off until the evening of time; as a net cast into the sea and not to be drawn forth until the morning of eternity. In the first and second Epistles to the Corinthians we find the Church spoken of now as the body and again as the spouse of Christ. But shall Christ's body perish? Or shall Truth itself prove faithless to His spouse? The Church is a real body. From Christ, the head, the vital force, the Holy Ghost, flows through all the members. As long, therefore, as the head is united to the body, and this quickening Spirit continues to flow, so long must the body continue to live. But Christ Himself in His last discourse, promised that the Spirit should dwell in His Church forever, saying: "When I go I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete that He may abide with you forever." The Church is the spouse of Christ, and as such He gives her the very Spirit of love as a pledge of everlasting fidelity. Again, in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew Christ says to St. Peter: "I say to thee that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her." From within and from without, therefore, the Church is indestructible. In the gospel of St. Luke Christ uses the same simile: "He that heareth the word of God and keepeth it is like to one who builds his house upon a rock. For the winds and the rains come and beat upon that house, but they shake it not, for it is founded on a rock." So, too, the storms of error and bigotry may break upon the Church, but

far from wrecking her, they only serve to settle her more solidly on her foundation—the immovable rock of Peter. Were even Satan with all his demon hosts to assault her she would easily withstand their attack, for by her side stands Satan's master, Jesus Christ. "Behold," He says to her, "behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Brethren, it would seem almost superfluous to multiply arguments in behalf of so self-evident a truth. For, after all, why did Christ institute His Church? His purpose appears from His commission to His Apostles. "Go ye forth," He says, "into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature, and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned." As long, therefore, as there remains a soul on earth, so long must the Church continue to be the way by leading men to salvation, the truth by preaching the Gospel, and the life by administering the sacraments.

Brethren, since, as is evident, the Church Christ founded cannot be destroyed, and since it is His expressed desire that she should be as one fold under one shepherd, it is the sacred duty of every Christian to inquire, Where is that Church now? To establish the apostolicity of Protestantism its adherents are forced to the gratuitous assertion that the true Church in her progress through the ages has at times so denuded herself of her material parts as to have become practically invisible. Such a theory is preposterous. Being a society of men instituted for

man's salvation, the Church militant can never even for a moment cease to be a tangible, visible reality. "How narrow is the gate," says Christ, "and straight the path that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it." But not even a few—no, not one—could He expect to find an invisible portal or trace out an unseen path. Or are we to conclude that Christ has ever mocked man's blindness? Are we to suppose Christ was unheard of the Father when He prayed Him to keep us from evil, to sanctify us in truth, to give us eternal life? No, there is to-day, as there ever has been, a Church whose history proves her to have been and to be all that Christ intended. True, composed of mortals as she is, with men, not angels for her ministers, her seamy human side has been at times unduly evidenced, but still while never wholly forfeiting her claim to holiness, she has been in her dogma and her discipline always one, Catholic in her dimensions, and apostolic in duration. No need of a fictitious invisibility to trace her history back to the days of Christ. She alone is the kingdom that has never been delivered up to her enemies, but has broken in pieces and consumed all other kingdoms. She alone has proven herself to be the pillar and the ground of truth. Her numberless saints and martyrs attest the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Her miraculous preservation against the united attacks of earth and hell proves that Christ is still mindful of His spouse. She alone is founded, not on the shifting sand but on the firm rock—on Peter. She alone can say now, and she alone shall be left to say to her

Lord with the Psalmist: "Often have they fought against me from my youth, but they could not prevail over me."

Brethren, speaking one day to His Apostles Christ said: "But the Son of man when He cometh, shall He find, think you, faith on earth?" Little indeed shall He find of that perfect faith that availeth to salvation, for there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets who shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Still, the Church is indestructible, and though the majority give up the faith, some few there will be who shall hold fast unto the coming of their Lord. Let this be our faith, our hope, to cling fast lovingly to the old true Church, that when her Lord shall say to her: "Arise, My beloved and come," we too may ascend with her to sing forever more: "Glory, honor and benediction to the Most High in the happy Church triumphant."

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost.

Capital Punishment.

"The wages of sin is death; every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and shall be cast into the fire."—Rom. vi. 23; Matt. vii. 19.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Bill in legislature: II. Story of movement. III. Their arguments.
I. False kindness: 1. Humanitarianism. 2. Three classes of poor. 3. Scripture proofs.
II. Reasons: 1. Authority, self-preservation. 2. Imitation, deterrent. 3. Just revenge natural.
III. Expedient: 1. Cruelty necessary. 2. Crime ever with us. 3. Italy.
Per.: Money might be spent on poor, ignorant, ungodly.

SERMON.

Brethren, there is at present before the Massachusetts Legislature a bill for the abolition of capital punishment. The bill counts among its supporters many distinguished gentlemen, lay and clerical, and many noted women, formally organized into a society called the Anti-Capital Punishment League. A half-century of repeated defeats have attended their cause, but with admirable courage and perseverance they still prosecute the struggle, in the hope, no doubt, that a victory in the old Bay State will go far towards propagating their doctrines throughout the nation and the world. The grounds of their opposition to the death penalty are many and various, some adducing scriptural arguments, and others alleging reasons of right or expediency. For us Catholics the

subject is an open question, so that a brief inquiry into the merits of the case may not be uninteresting.

Brethren, ours is preëminently the age of humanitarianism. As Christianity grows older, man seems to realize more and more the nobility of his species, the value of human life, and his duty to preserve it at any cost. Hence these mighty efforts in behalf of the poor and the afflicted. But some are so irreverent as to hint that philanthropy is being overdone; that it is superseding Christianity and all forms of Theism; or at least that it is inverting the order of the two great commandments on which depend the whole law and the prophets. Its methods, too, say they, are not sufficiently discriminating. God's poor, as is fitting, have first claim to its benevolence, but not infrequently the most atrocious criminals—the devil's poor—are treated with mawkish sentimentality, while what may be called the poor devils—the morally mediocre, such as the outcast mother with her nameless babe at her breast, or the luckless itinerant—seek in vain the food and shelter which, were they criminals, they could easily command. However this may be, it is surely no exaggeration to say that the attempt to wrest the Scriptures into conflict with the law of capital punishment is an effort of kindness as vain as it is misplaced. God said to Cain (Gen. iv. 10): "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth," and who can doubt that the purpose of that cry was not leniency, but vengeance on the guilty fratricide? True, God for obvious reasons did not then and there

inflict such punishment, but when man, having increased and multiplied, had been organized into a working theocracy, the law of a life for a life was clearly defined and strictly enforced.

In Genesis ix. 6 we read, "Whosoever sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed," and in the following books we find the evolutions of this law and civil society keeping equal pace in recounting and specifying the numerous crimes worthy of death. Though the spirit of God grieves over the necessity of such drastic measures, still (Eccl. xv. 18) "before man is life and death, good and evil, and that which he shall choose shall be given to him," and hence holy Job (Job xix. 29) admonishes us to "flee from the face of the sword, for the sword is the revenger of iniquities." The consequences also of undue leniency are set forth where the prophet of God announces to Achab (III. Kings xx. 42): "Because thou hast spared King Benadad, a man worthy of death, thy life shall be for his life," and tardy justice is reproved (Eccl. viii. 11): "Because sentence not being speedily pronounced against the evil, the children of men commit evil without fear." It may be objected that the old law of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was explicitly abrogated by the Saviour, and such indeed is the case as between man and man, but not as regards civil government and the punishment of capital crimes. Christ rebuked Peter's murderous assault on Malchus, "because," He said (Matt. xxvi. 52), "all that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The power of the sword is here denied to the indi-

vidual, but expressly conceded to the State. St. Paul counsels obedience to civil authority as to God's ordinance for (Rom. xiii. 4) "he [the king] beareth not the sword in vain, but is God's avenging minister to execute wrath upon the evil," and St. John (Apoc. xiii. 10) reiterates the law that "he that shall kill by the sword, shall be killed by the sword." Such testimony, though brief, is clear and convincing, for the Scriptures are as little likely to contradict themselves as they are to countenance a "relic of barbarity."

Brethren, another objection to capital punishment aims at the right of the State to inflict it. The powers of government, it is argued, are derived from or through the people, and so cannot exceed those the people themselves enjoy. Certainly the exercise by a private individual of retributive justice to the extent of taking human life is never lawful, and it is doubtful if the presence of even seventy millions of Americans would legalize a lynching. Few will deny the soldier's right to kill his country's enemies, or the citizen's to slay his assailant, provided each observe a moderation consistent with a blameless self-defence, but apart from such like exceptions the right to punish with death does not reside with the people. Does this, then, prove that no such right exists? By no means. What it does prove is the falsity of our theory regarding the origin of civil authority, and the truth of St. Paul's teaching (Rom. xiii. 1) that "there is no power but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God." Disgusted with Old World absolutism and the doctrine of the divine

right of kings, the New World evolved the idea of a sovereign people and a government vested with popular arbitrary power. Hence come the axioms that all men are born free and equal, and that government exists by consent of the governed—principles questionable enough in the light of experience, and productive, for conquerors and expansionists, of much embarrassment and seeming inconsistency. The ship of State in shunning Scylla goes smash upon Charybdis. The middle course is safest, viz., that the people have a right indeed to choose the administration, but that the duly elected are thereupon clothed with power directly from on high. The State's right, therefore, to inflict capital punishment, neither comes from the people, nor can it be abrogated by them, though its exercise may by common consent be suspended. So inherent, so necessary to civil authority is this power, that not even the State itself can renounce it. The inalienable right of self-defence belongs to the State as well as to the individual, and obedience to law and order is the very life of the State. Now, love and fear are the motives of obedience, but of the two fear is the stronger. It is the duty of the government, therefore, to fit the punishment to the crime—to preserve evenly balanced the scales in the hands of justice—and so violently is that balance disturbed by certain species of murder, that equilibrium can be restored only by weighing a life against a life. For, whether the object of punishment be to reclaim the criminal, deter the vicious, or satisfy the outraged majesty of the law, its propor-

tion to the crime must be clearly evident. Excess and defect are equally fatal to its efficacy. But experience proves that of a certain class of malefactors, the only good prisoner is a dead prisoner. You may punish them ever so severely in the hope that they will obey "not only for wrath's but for conscience' sake," but eventually you will find the basic motive of their abhorrence of crime and respect for law is the active lictor by the side of the ruler. To merely kill a wayward limb that threatens the symmetry of some splendid tree, or to apply soothing lotions to a cancerous growth, would be little creditable to gardener or physician, and vastly more reprehensible and disastrous would it be for the government to visit capital crimes with merely civil death, or withhold the knife from a dangerous ulcer on the body politic. Nor must we lose sight here of the law of imitation, and the necessity the State is under of dealing at times with epidemics of crime. That a little leaven corrupteth the whole mass, is especially true of the leaven of iniquity. Avarice, lust, desire of revenge, etc., are as so many ever-ready and deadly mines beneath the surface of society, and a single explosion usually precipitates a general upheaval. To an individual highly charged with such passions, the satisfying of them is of all good things the best. Not even penal servitude for life can altogether embitter the sweetness of revenge, for the youthful desperado receives his sentence with a scornful smile, and coolly marches off to prison with a laugh and a swagger. But even in his most desperate calculations the

criminal always counts on preserving his own life as a condition *sine qua non* to the enjoyment of his revenge. Death to him is an unmitigated misfortune, and the thought of the lonely death-watch, the ghostly scaffold, and the black cap, is a powerful factor in staying his hand. Death, then, is the one grand deterrent which the State may and must employ, both to preserve and restore social order and to counteract the fatal fascination by which crime sometimes tends to run riot in the community. Death, too, has been recognized since the world began as the only just retribution for certain atrocious crimes. Foul murder is committed, and, by a certain natural instinct, men immediately demand that the murderer pay the penalty. Examples of this are to be seen in the necessity in olden times for the cities of refuge, in the later right of sanctuary, in the Italian vendetta and the modern lynching. Now, who will dare assert that man's natural impulse to wreak just vengeance is essentially evil? Nothing in Nature is essentially evil. The methods suggested by passion or an exasperating paralysis of justice may be unlawful, but the impulse that gave rise to the movement is natural and as such is good. The necessity of the right to inflict capital punishment, therefore, is founded on Nature itself, and the exercise thereof by the State, far from being a usurpation of God's exclusive prerogative, is entirely in accord with the designs of the Author of man and of society.

Brethren, though a right may exist, yet its exercise may be inexpedient. This, we are told, is the case

regarding the death penalty. Such revolting cruelty, they say, is foreign to the spirit of these days of higher civilization, and against it is the sentiment of the majority. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, punishment is cruel only when it is wanton, excessive, and that death is the only adequate penalty for certain crimes has already been proven. Besides, the advocates of life imprisonment claim it is severer punishment than death, so that the argument from cruelty might be turned against themselves. No doubt criminals to a man would vote for abolition, which of itself is a cogent reason for preserving the law as it stands. Anyhow, it might be well to place the blame of such cruelties where it belongs—not on the State, which regards them as lamentable necessities, but on the criminals themselves who evoke them.

Indeed it is hard to see how this movement can plume itself on being a product of superior culture, when its very existence depends upon the fact that certain types of the modern Christian are more shocked at the sight of sensible pain than by moral evil. The desire for the abolition of capital punishment is in line with the desire for the abolition of hell and many other disagreeable things. One kind lady went so far as to quote the dying Saviour's words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The force of the argument is not quite clear, for as it proves nothing or proves too much, the result in either case is identical. An ancient commentator on the Gospels makes the quaint

remark, that Caiphas's counsel, to the effect that "it was expedient from time to time that one man should die for the people," was a principle as old as humanity, and that though false in its application, it was and is, all things considered, fundamentally true. Never, in fact, was death as a deterrent more necessary than now, in view of the leniency of justice and the humanity of the modern penitentiary; and in general the higher the civilization the greater the need of capital punishment.

The degeneracy of criminals is a constant quantity in all ages, and it were unreasonable that the punishment due to their crimes should be measured by any other rule or at all affected by the changing standards of society. The criminal, says the Psalmist (Psalms xlviii. 15), "hath matched himself with senseless beasts and become like unto them." He forfeits the dignity of manhood and must be dealt with as a dangerous monster, for, says Aristotle, "worse is an evil man than a beast, and vastly more noxious." Nor must we be frightened at the bare possibility of the innocent being sometimes executed, for the same reason will militate against imprisonment for life and all forms of punishment. There is no comparison between the chances of life prisoners escaping or being pardoned, and the chances of the innocent being put to death, and the power that is charged with the safety of the community must act accordingly.

Ah! that fair land of Italy, the garden of the gods, where the death penalty is unknown! Who that has seen them has not grieved over those eyesores on the

face of Nature, her penal settlements? If the decree of disarmament were to be enforced to-morrow militarism would there have to stay if for nothing else than to guard those colonies. Possibly, too, the humanity of Italy has worked evil for America, for many are let go or escape, and working their way across the Atlantic prove to us the truth of the principle that a man's first deed of blood is rarely his last. Facts might here be gathered to offset the opposition figures, but we refrain, for it is curious but true that if you are a good arithmetician you can prove almost anything from statistics. Some one has said that of the three kind of lies, positive, comparative, and superlative, the superlative lies are statistics.

Brethren, you and I well know, and God knows, that innocent subjects are not wanting on whom we may exercise our benevolent desire to save human lives. What a blessing the tons of provisions that enter the barred gate in the great high wall would prove to the worthy poor! The money spent on many a modern Uriah Heep, would be better employed in training some orphan arab in the ways of good citizenship. Above all we might agitate, if agitate we must, the question of religious education and its necessity in the preservation of law and order. It is another and a better way to the threefold result at which we all are aiming, viz., Glory to God, good will on earth amongst men, and peace.

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

"Make unto you friends of the Mammon of iniquity that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."—Luke xvi. 9.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Difficulty of parable. II. Israelites and Rebecca. III. Four principles.
I. His unconcern: 1. Sense of ownership. 2. All are stewards. 3. No thought of morrow.
II. His sudden call: 1. Informers. 2. Warning unheeded. 3. Death of worldling.
III. His device: 1. Effort, temporal and spiritual. 2. Master's praise. 3. Wisdom, earthly, heavenly.
Per.: Parable of St. John Damascene.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, more than one eminent interpreter of the Scriptures has been forced to confess that of all the parables of Our Lord this one of the unjust steward offers the gravest difficulties. Even the profoundly erudite Cajetan gave it up in despair, and to the great Cardinal commentator, you know, every theologian carries his doubts and perplexities. The chief fault to be found with the many ingenious or false or absurd explanations proposed is, that they try to evolve more meaning out of Our Lord's words than their Author intended them to convey. In their eagerness to establish a perfect similitude, they make all parallel impossible, for from the fact, for instance, that his master commended the unjust steward, it cannot be concluded that God could ever approve of

knavery or dishonesty. Somewhat similiar difficulties are encountered in God's approval of the despoilment of the Egyptians by the Israelites on the eve of their exodus, and in His tacit acquiescence in Rebecca's trick, whereby Esau lost and Jacob gained the paternal blessing and the rights of primogeniture. These and such like scriptural problems take on a simpler aspect when we remember, first, that God, being absolute Lord of all that is, can transfer temporal possessions from one to another without breach of the seventh commandment; secondly, that earthly goods are in the sight of God of little account—of no account, in fact, except in so far as they serve to promote such heavenly interests as the deliverance of His peoples from the bondage of sin, or their introduction into everlasting dwellings in His celestial land of promise; thirdly, that, as the words of Scripture have a twofold meaning, the literal and the spiritual, a passage which on its surface rehearses the violation of some virtue such as justice or truthfulness will, on closer inspection, be found to contain a hidden, spiritual sense wherein these or some other virtues are inculcated or extolled. Thus, deceitful Jacob is but a figure of the merciful Redeemer, who, covering Himself with our nature and our sins, impersonated us before His heavenly Father to obtain His forgiveness and His blessing. Finally, that no perfect parallel can ever be drawn between man and God, between earth and heaven, and the respective conditions of each. With these principles in mind we will readily see that the lesson of the

parable is a very simple one indeed, that in the unjust steward's false sense of security and sudden embarrassment and cunning method of providing for the future, Our Lord teaches us to employ in gaining heaven by means of our temporal possessions, if not greater, at least as great prudence as is exhibited by worldlings in their provision for the day of adversity or for their declining years. For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.

First of all, then, we have to consider the utter lack of solicitude which characterized the unfaithful steward. His rich master, trusting him implicitly, had left the administration of the estate so entirely in his hands that the sense of stewardship had gradually given way to a proprietary feeling. How true that is to Nature! You have noticed, no doubt, with what easy carelessness bank cashiers and managers of large concerns handle immense sums of money, and from the sad details of court proceedings all of us have learned how easily conscience becomes blunted with usage and how often the coin sticks to the fingers through which it passes. An Italian proverb has it that no great river was ever yet without its muddy water. Nor is this true alone of the business world; it is verified also in the greater universe of men and things. The Lord's is the earth and the fulness thereof, and men are but the managers of His vast estate. The world is like a great and beautiful mansion, with its lofty blue ceilings and its brilliant lights and its carpets of velvety green and

its vast tables loaded with rich viands and fruits and garnished with flowers, and over all this man presides. In all the world there is not one, no not even the humblest and the poorest, to whose care God has not allotted some portion of His wealth. The rich administer His larger interests, humanly speaking, but the poor also have intrusted to them a life in comparison with which the whole earth is valueless, a soul for which ten thousand worlds would be an inadequate exchange, and time—the golden key to the treasuries of heaven. In the order of grace, too, our stewardship includes the gifts of the true faith, the sacrifice and the sacraments of our Church, the communion of God's saints, and the infinite merits of our Redeemer. But both in the order of Nature and of grace we easily forget that we are stewards, and we soon begin to waste by selfish extravagance or neglect our Master's goods. The rich feel, or at least they act, as though they were absolute lords of all they possess, for, while Lazarus is being hunted from the door, Dives, in purple and fine linen, is feasting sumptuously. And yet Dives's superfluous wealth belongs by right to the Lord and to the poor with whom Christ identified Himself when He said: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did not charity nor justice to these, My least brethren, neither did you them to Me." Nor is the stewardship of the poor over their eternal interests always above reproach, though, truth to say, they are generally the more faithful, for man's fidelity to God is usually in inverse ratio to God's liberality to man. The old

saying: That one of the surest ways of making a man your enemy is to load him with favors, is oftenest verified in the relations between man and God. There are exceptions, of course—Pharao sometimes finds a faithful Joseph—but none the less they *are* the exceptions. And howsoever great his dishonesty, howsoever complicated his accounts, each is firmly persuaded that the day of reckoning is afar off. Others may see ruin closing in around us; we can see it in the case of others; but as for ourselves, we are serenely confident. The sailors on Jonas's straining ship are all bustle and confusion, but Jonas, the one person most concerned, is fast asleep. By and by, says the unjust steward, I will cease from pilfering, and later on I will make restitution. In my will, says Plutus, I will remember the different charities, but I am not ready just yet to sign a will. There is no hurry, says the sinner, to-morrow, perhaps, I will arise and go to my Father, and if not to-morrow, at the last surely. To the last, says Wisdom itself, they shall be marrying and giving in marriage, and Dives shall be confidently planning for his future on earth with not a thought of heaven, even while the Lord is at his very door to demand his soul of him.

Brethren, the second point worthy of notice is the steward's dreadful plight when suddenly called to account. Sooner or later every David meets his Nathan. "Your sin," says Holy Writ, "will find you out." Doubtless the steward had been severe with those under him, and now these detect his dishonesty and in return hasten to inform their lord. A man

may for a time appear to succeed in serving both God and Mammon, but eventually his duplicity will be exposed. God's angels, good and bad, have continually the freedom of His audience chamber; aye, and virtuous heathens and heretics, as Christ said, shall rise in judgment against us; and you know that such sins as oppression of the poor and defrauding the laborer of his wages cry for vengeance to the Lord God of Sabaoth. Oh! the shame and the misery of the defaulter brought to bay! What wonder that it incites to murder, or impels to madness or self-destruction! But more dreadful still is it to fall unprepared into the hands of the living God. Notice well his master's words to the steward: "What is this I hear of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer." He does not demand the account then and there, but bids him go and prepare and then present his statement. Nor is our God less merciful. No man ever yet died without having at some time or other received sufficient warning, and hence the guilt of unpreparedness is all the greater. In the nature of things the lightning should precede the thunder, but the good God has so arranged things that we hear the rumbling of the coming storm before the lightning strikes. The Lord has said, indeed, that He will come as comes a thief in the night, but how many times and in how many ways does He warn us that thieves are constantly abroad, and that His faithful and true servant should be ever on the watch! And oh! the dreadful consequences of allowing the warning to go un-

heeded! Saul was a mighty man and valiant, but when the ghost of Samuel said to him: "To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me," he fell lifeless from very terror. Brethren, each one of us, if we fare no worse, shall one day hear from the lips of a physician or of a priest these fated words: "Your case is hopeless, you must prepare to die; you must prepare to give an account of your stewardship, for now you can be steward no longer." Let not your comfortable circumstances lead you to bid your soul eat, drink, and make merry, for that long years of enjoyment are before you, for this very night God may demand your soul of you, and whose, then, will be all these things you have provided? Let not your youth and strength persuade you that length of days is sure to be your lot, for very often death acts as did Jacob when, in blessing Joseph's sons, he, contrary to all expectations, crossed his hands and placed his right on the younger and on the older his left. Let no sense of self-righteousness make you overconfident in your final perseverance, for who would have dreamt that Judas's place in heaven was destined to be occupied by a crucified thief? When our summons comes, our uppermost thought may be that of the unjust steward: "What shall I do? What shall I do?" Notice well the contrast between the steward's dilemma and that of Dives. Each thinks within himself: "What shall I do?" but one is embarrassed with riches, the other is face to face with ruin; one concludes to store up much goods for many years, the other determines to distribute even his master's

wealth among the poor; and the Lord, you know, commended the unjust steward, but Dives was buried in hell. A soul that has been more active in hoarding up perishable treasure on earth than in heaping up everlasting treasure in heaven, hears death's announcement with somewhat of the awful anxiety and terror with which the wicked shall start at the sound of Gabriel's trumpet. In an instant it finds itself shorn of all its earthly possessions and exposed, poor and naked and miserable, alike to the helpless pity of its friends, men and angels, and to the ridicule of its enemies, the devils. The wretched plight of David's ambassadors when King Hanon shaved half of their heads and one side of their faces and cut away their nether garments and sent them away, is an eloquent picture of the utter confusion of an unjust steward of God when suddenly called upon by his Master to render an account, for that now he can be steward no longer. "What shall I do?" he says. "What shall I do? To dig I am unable, for for me the time for acquiring merit has closed forever; and to beg I am ashamed, for how can I, unmerciful as I have been, hope to obtain mercy? What shall I do? What shall I do?"

Brethren, consider thirdly the steward's device, thought out in the few moments yet available, and whereby he hoped to provide for his future. While in favor with his lord he had doubtless dealt severely with his master's tenantry, but now that he can be steward no longer he hastens to curry favor with those he had formerly oppressed. What an amount

of thought he must have crowded into those few moments, and how typical it all is of the deep study that should characterize our provision for our future beyond the grave! All too seldom in this regard do we pause to ask ourselves the question: "What shall I do?" Had we ahead of us a very searching competitive examination for some coveted position, or for a title, or for a purse of gold, what labor we would undergo, how all-absorbed in study would we be, and oh! the anxious days and the sleepless nights until the contest had taken place and the decision become known! See with what care the defendant, whose life or perhaps some lesser interest is at stake, collects his facts and witnesses, prepares his case, argues and cajoles and, it may be, bribes the jury or his opponent's witnesses, and altogether moves heaven and earth to gain a favorable verdict! All this and much more will men do and endure to obtain an empty corruptible crown, or to avert a temporary disgrace or misfortune or punishment, and thus the children of this world prove wiser in their generation than the children of light. For, alas! when there is question of our spiritual interests we rarely can arrive at any correct or practical conclusion. Christ has said that whoever wishes to be His disciple must deny himself, and that whoever would be perfect must give up all to the poor and coming follow Him; but with all that precept and example before us we yet cannot bring ourselves to say definitely with the steward: "I know what I shall do." But he calling together every one of his lord's debtors, and producing in

haste their notes of hand, ordered them to so alter the bonds that the debt of the first was reduced by one-half, that of the second by one-fifth, and so on with the others according as he expected from each more or less kindness when he failed. And his master, we are told, commended his action for that he had done wisely. Herein consists the crux of the parable's difficulty. We may say that the steward had not yet been deposed; that he was steward still and acted strictly within his right in trying to undo some of his past oppression, but none the less humanly speaking his proceeding was dishonest and practically forgery. Yet in the purely human aspect of the case may we not find some sort of justification for him? You remember the parable of the unmerciful servant who, though his master had forgiven him all his debts, was still unwilling to forego his claims against his fellow servant and was consequently sold into slavery until he had paid the last farthing. And, as mercy's rule works both ways, should not the steward be forgiven now in consideration of his willingness to forgive others? But, you say, he is robbing Peter to recompense Paul! Well, recollect that we are dealing with a parable, and that it is necessary to strain human conditions to bring them into parallel with the divine. The steward did wisely, because the foolishness of this world is wisdom with God, and the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. To store up riches or to scatter them among the poor will appear to us to be folly or wisdom, according as our point of view is material or

spiritual, and a special fickleness and inconsistency must ever characterize the judgment of those who are trying the impossible task of serving both God and Mammon. John the Baptist came neither eating nor drinking and men said: "He hath a devil." Christ came eating and drinking and they called Him a glutton—these servers of the two masters. Like the children in the market-place, they are piped to and they will not dance, they are mourned with and they will not weep. Thus is wisdom done justice to by all her children—by contrast, viz., with the folly of the slaves of Mammon and the inconsistency of the servants of the two masters, and directly, in the consistency of the lives of her own, the servants of God, the children of light. For these last hold the world at its true worth. They are deeply imbued with the responsibilities of their stewardship, and seeing things with the eyes of God, they value and use the things of earth for their one legitimate object, the glory of God and the spiritual betterment of themselves and of their neighbors. It is thus that the Mammon of iniquity can and should be employed to secure for ourselves friends here and hereafter. Even as Jacob sent ahead rich presents to appease the wrath of his brother Esau, so should we devote our earthly possessions to the enrichment of heaven with souls saved, that when our own time shall have come they may receive us into everlasting dwellings.

Brethren, St. John Damascene in his history of Barlaam and Josaphat gives us a parable which has all the point of that of the unjust steward, with none

of its difficulties. Among a certain people, he says, the law is that each year they shall kidnap some foreigner, totally ignorant of their customs, and that they shall invest him with all the powers of royalty, but that, the year being ended, they shall banish him to a desert island. But occasionally it happens that the king chooses his advisers so wisely and wins them so thoroughly that they inform him of his coming fate, whereupon he quietly sets about converting the barren island into such an earthly paradise that the sweetness of his exile exceeds the delights of kingship. Brethren, God has placed us in this world for a year, for a day, and He has made us stewards, aye kings, of His creation, and by the added gift of the true faith He has made us to be the children of light. Let us beware how we conduct our affairs; let us be careful to which counsellors, the world or God, we give ear; let us remember our term of office is brief and ever drawing to a close; let us make to ourselves friends of the Mammon of iniquity, that when we fail they may receive us into everlasting dwellings.

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost.

Christ on Mount Olivet.

"When Jesus drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, He wept over it."—Luke xix. 41.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Power of Scripture. II. Arguments for Christ's divinity.
I. Wept over city: 1. Divine sympathy. 2. Unselfishness. 3. Popular response.
II. Foretold ruin: 1. Prophecy. 2. Author and subject. 3. Destruction of Jerusalem.
III. Cleared Temple: 1. Sacrifice. 2. Traders. 3. St. Jerome.
IV. Lord of all: 1. Supper-room. 2. Ass and foal. 3. True force of argument.
Per.: 1. Power of Scripture. 2. Choice of means. 3. Omnipotence.

SERMON.

Brethren, if you care this afternoon to take your family Bible—and you should regard it as a sacred weekly duty so to do—if, I say, you care, after church, to take your family Bible and read over and ponder over the Gospel I have just read—Luke xix. 41–47—you will find there three excellent arguments against the anti-Christian spirit of our times—three convincing proofs of Christ's divinity.

And first, we read that He wept over Jerusalem. Lamentation over our own misfortunes is a purely human passion, but to forget self and weep over the ruin of another is divine. Now, here was Christ on the day of His victory—the one day of His whole earthly career worthy, humanly speaking, to be called triumphant. Fresh in the popular memory

was the resuscitation of Lazarus, the healing of the paralytic, the sight restored to the man born blind—and but yesterday occurred the wonder of the Transfiguration—miracles so stupendous that they silenced even His enemies, and encouraged His well-wishers to come forth to meet Him crying "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." And yet, of all that throng on Olivet's slope, He alone is sad. His eyes turn from the acclaiming multitude to the city beneath Him and He bursts into tears. Is it the thought of His past wrongs compared to His present triumphs that has touched His heart? No, He was ever cheerful and patient under suffering and wrong. Is it the prevision of the tortures He is soon to endure at the hands of this very people? No, self has no place in His thoughts. Standing there, a figure of sublime, superhuman disinterestedness, such as the world has never since or before seen, He weeps over the city of His enemies, their short-sightedness and approaching destruction. After even His greatest miracles, Peter alone confessed Him to be the Son of the living God. The prodigies attending His death on the cross moved Longinus alone to declare "Verily this was the Son of God," and even at His Resurrection the words "My Lord and my God" were uttered by Thomas and Magdalen only. Yet here, merely at seeing Him weep over the city—an action so simple and yet so sublime, so forgetful of self and so full of compassion and forgiveness for others, so intensely human and yet so immeasurably

above the human—so divine—that vast throng cried out its profession of faith till the hills and valleys rang again with "Hosannas to the Son of David!" and "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Secondly, we read the words of Christ addressed to the city—words scarcely intelligible, so broken are they by His sobs and tears. "Didst thou," He says, "but know this joyful day that I am the guardian of thy peace, thou wouldst not seek to murder Me. Didst thou but know what things are in store for thee in punishment for that crime, thou too wouldst weep. But now all this is hidden from thine eyes," and then He goes on to foretell the city's impending calamities. Here is our second argument for Christ's divinity. Experience teaches us, and Holy Writ further assures us, that the events of the future are known to no man—no, not even to the angels in heaven—but to God alone. "Show the things that are to come hereafter," says Isaias (xli. 23), "and we shall know that ye are gods." True, the prophets of the Old Law foretold the events of the New, but, as St. Peter says, it was not they who spoke, but the Spirit of God who spoke in them and through them. Between their prophecies and those of Christ, there is this difference, that theirs pointed ever not to themselves but to Christ. What the Old Testament says in prophecy, the New repeats as already accomplished. The two are well typified in the two seraphic spirits described by Isaias as flying through the heavens crying, one to the other,

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth," or again in the two cherubim, over the ark of the Covenant, whose wings met midway and who gazed ever one upon the other. But Christ's prophecies all concern Himself, He is the beginning and the end—the A and the Z—the central figure of all prophecy. Therefore I say, Christ, being a true Prophet, must have had in Him the Spirit of God; and being the subject of His own prophecy He must have been God Himself. Now a true prophecy is one that is justified by the event, and that Christ was a true Prophet was never more clearly proven than in the things He foretold regarding the city of Jerusalem. "Thine enemies shall come upon thee," He says, "and they shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and straighten thee on every side and beat thee flat to the ground and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." Forty years after Christ's crucifixion that prophecy was fulfilled to the letter, as we learn from the non-Christian historians, Josephus and Egisippus. They tell us that thirty-six years after Christ's death there began a series of prodigies in the city, such as men had never seen before. Ghostly armies were seen to do battle in the air over the city; a blinding light frequently in an instant turned the darkest night into the brightest day; earthquakes shook the walls and flung open the gates of the city; and for four years, night and day, a man, a stranger to all, roamed the city streets crying: "Woe, woe to

Jerusalem." Finally, in the fortieth year after Christ, when three million Jews were collected in Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, the Roman army suddenly appeared and laid siege to the city. In their march on Jerusalem they had slain no less than fourteen hundred thousand Jews. But the worst was to come, for now began a war compared to which that of China and Japan was nothing, and the American Revolution as the killing of one man. For the Jews inside the city were divided among themselves, and fought till, from very hunger and disease, they could fight no longer. On the other hand, the deserters and fugitives were all captured and cut open by the enemy, in the hope their captors had of securing the gold the poor wretches had attempted to save by swallowing. War and famine—famine such that the nearest and dearest slew one another for a meal, and mothers secretly cooked and ate their own infants. Dead bodies everywhere, and the living died while trying to bury the dead, until the city became one vast pestilential morgue. And at last, when resistance was no longer possible, the victorious Romans rushed in with fire and sword, and burned and razed the Temple to the ground, and levelled the city walls to the very foundation. Josephus estimates that, at the siege of Jerusalem alone, ninety-seven thousand were taken prisoner, eleven hundred thousand were slain, two thousand were killed by their own people, and two thousand more died by their own hand. Such was the fulfilment of Christ's prophecy, and even had we no historic testimony of this fact, there

is still in the city of Rome an imperishable proof—the triumphal arch of Titus, the victorious Roman general, bearing on its sculptured sides the story of the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem—the best preserved of all the arches, as though divine Providence would have it stand as a proof to all ages of God's ultimate victory over His enemies, of the exact fulfilment of a true prophecy, and of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Our third and last proof of Christ's divinity is contained in the words: "And entering into the Temple He cast out them that sold therein and them that bought." All Judea came annually to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice in the Temple, and as those coming from afar found it more convenient to purchase their offerings in Jerusalem, the dealers, in the heat of competition, had set up their booths in the very porch of the Temple, so that the "house of prayer had become a den of thieves." Now the force of the argument cannot be better presented than in the words of St. Jerome himself. "Some," he says, "affirm that the greatest proof of Our Lord's divinity was the resuscitation of Lazarus; others, the cure of the man born blind; others, the Transfiguration; but to me, of all His miracles none seems more wonderful than this: that one man, a lowly unfortunate, on His way to the gallows, could have so prevailed over the hatred and cupidity of the Scribes and Pharisees as to overthrow their tables and booths, scourge them from the Temple and effect, in a few moments, what all the power of the Roman legions,

after seven years' trial, failed to accomplish. A celestial fire must have radiated from His eyes, and the majesty of the divinity shone in His countenance."

Brethren, it is characteristic of the Gospel history of Our Lord's life that seemingly trivial incidents such as the foregoing are found on closer inspection to be replete with deep dogmatic truth. This is further illustrated by two other circumstances closely allied to the subject of to-day's Gospel. A few days later Our Lord, wishing to celebrate the Passover and institute the Blessed Eucharist, sent Peter and John ahead, saying: "Go ye into the city and when you shall see a man carrying a pitcher of water say to him: The Master saith, Where is my refectory where I may eat the pasch with My disciples? And he shall show you a large dining-room, and there prepare." That the event transpired just as He foretold goes to show that the forecast was the exercise of no mere human knowledge but a calling into play of the divine gift of prophecy, and the promptness with which the man acceded to so extraordinary a request is proof positive that the petitioner was the Lord and Master of all, whose will no man can resist. Again, on the morning of the very day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when they drew nigh to the city, Jesus sent two disciples ahead into Bethphage, saying: "Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her; loose them and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye that the Lord

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hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go." The prophet Zacharias had foretold the coming of the future King, the Messias, in these words: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek and sitting upon an ass and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke." These words were well known, and very dear to the hearts of all who looked for the redemption of Israel, and their exact fulfilment in the entry of Christ and His followers into Jerusalem accounts in no small measure for the remarkable outburst of popular enthusiasm with which He was greeted. Here then we have as proofs of His divinity, first, His wonderful insight into the future, amounting to omniscience; second, His entire conformity to the Messianic prophecies, even in the minutest details; and third, His practical assertion of absolute dominion over all things. An unbeliever would probably attempt to explain away the force of the argument by asserting that the ready acquiescence of the man in placing his guest-chamber at the disposal of the Saviour was but the exercise of ordinary hospitality, but nowhere in history do we find that the law of kindness to strangers was wont to be carried to such extremes. Neither is the Socialist's explanation to be admitted, viz., that each incident is but an assertion on the part of Our Lord that each of us has a right in the time of need to help himself to the belongings of his more fortunate neighbor. Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil the law, and the seventh point of the law is, "Thou shalt not steal." He said, indeed, "The

Master hath need of them," but there was no such crying necessity in the case as justifies the forcible appropriation of another's provisions, lands, or cattle in times of war or famine, or in the face of a mighty conflagration. Besides, in neither case did the owners yield to force, but each evidently assented quite cheerfully, proving that Christ's almighty power influenced them to cede to the Lord that which He had but lent them for a time, and which anytime and everywhere He could justly claim as His own.

Brethren, from these considerations I would have you gather three points: First, the power of Holy Scripture as a defender of truth and a weapon against error. The most appalling danger to religion in modern times is the popular loss of faith in Christ's divinity. The ideas of the non-Catholic world on this most important point are growing daily more vague and uncertain. Let us not neglect the study of those sacred pages, in almost every line of which we will find reasons for the faith that is in us. Second, Let us admire the sublime condescension with which Christ chooses at times the lowliest of His creatures to be the vehicle of His truth or the instrument of His will. The royal entry of earthly kings is made in gorgeous chariots drawn by prancing steeds, but Christ's kingdom is not from hence. The humble ass and colt, recalling as they do the prophecy of Zachary, add more lustre to His retinue than all such pomp and ceremony. Such disregard of earthly aids is in line with His choice of fishermen to be His Apostles, and per-

haps the person and the mission of each of us, however humble, are as precious before God as those of the great ones of the earth. Finally, let us adore the Lord's transcendent power whereby He is able, without infringing on our liberty, to use us as He will. Let us throw open to Him the citadels of our souls, and invite Him to take undivided possession, crying: "Hosanna to the Son of David," and, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

"O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men . . . O God, be merciful to me, a sinner . . . I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other."—Luke xviii. 11–14.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Judgments of Pharisee and Publican. II. Æsop. III. Charity the one thing needed.

I. Self-judgments: 1. Pharisee's claims to credit. 2. Court of conscience. 3. Two methods.

II. Judgments of others: 1. Virtuous and wicked. 2. Publicans. 3. None perfect nor all bad.

III. God's judgments: 1. Looketh on the heart. 2. His omniscience. 3. Our blindness.

Per.: 1. Judge not others. 2. Judge self unfavorably. 3. God's holiness our standard.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, we find recorded in the Gospel the Pharisee's opinion of himself, and his opinion of other men, among them the publican, and we are told how erroneous in each case was his judgment. It is interesting to speculate what may have been the

publican's idea of the Pharisee, or to imagine the surprise of each had they been told later on of Christ's, of God's, judgment between them. The parable was addressed, you know, to "some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others," and it is worthy of notice that the only one in Christ's audience or Christ's parable who succeeded in arriving at a just estimate of himself or of others, was he who humbly said: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner." The inference would seem to be that at no time are men more prone to error than when they attempt to determine their own or their neighbor's moral status, and that in no other matter are human opinions more likely to run counter to the judgments of God. It is Æsop, I believe, who represents man as going through life with two pouches suspended from his neck, one in front and one behind, and in the former, ever before his eyes, he keeps his own virtues and his neighbor's vices, but in the latter, behind his back, his neighbor's good traits and his own faults. Never shall we judge just judgments until we have reversed the pouches, or in some way acquired the spirit of the publican. Nor is this a matter of little moment; it is a question of such human interest that it appeals even to the Pagan, and its claim on the attention of Christians is more especial still, since it deals with that new commandment Christ gave us, the very groundwork, the heart of all religion, the law of charity. "For charity," says St. Paul, "is not puffed up, nor envious, nor self-seeking, nor perverse, but is patient, is kind, thinketh no evil; re-

joiceth not in iniquity but in the truth; beareth, believeth, hopeth, endureth all things. For now we see in a dark manner, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then even as we are known."

First of all, then, we see from the parable that favorable self-judgments are apt to be fallacious. There is not one of us, perhaps, who has half as sound reasons for regarding himself with complacency as had the Pharisee. Execrate them as we may, we are still forced to admit that the Pharisees as a sect had a noble mission, which they nobly fulfilled. From the very beginning, exclusiveness had been one of the most prominent characteristics of the chosen people. It was God's design that they should continue an unmixed race, a nation apart, and in the course of ages so firmly did this idea take hold on the popular mind and so intimately interwoven with the Messianic promises did they regard it, that we find them everywhere and always hedging themselves around with barriers to check the incursions and the secularizing influence of the detested Gentiles. How strong was this spirit in Apostolic times is evident from St. Paul's strenuous and oft-repeated efforts to abolish the distinction between the Jew and Gentile and to place all on a common Christian level, and how much of it survives to-day is apparent in the aloofness and clannishness of our Hebrew citizens. Now, to preserve their integrity inviolate was for the Jews on their return from captivity a difficult task indeed, for the bulk of the nation remained irrevocably scattered through heathendom from Baby-

lon to Rome; Samaria, the very heart of Israel, had apostatized; the north had become the Galilee of the Gentiles; all Palestine, a prey to a denationalizing lust for empire, had fallen under the yoke of Cæsar, and the entire population, by the exigencies of business and politics, was hourly exposed to heathen defilement. Then it was that the Pharisees arose to be the saviours of the nation. Self-constituted expounders of the law, they proceeded to throw around each member of their race at home and abroad such a network of ordinances concerning years of jubilee, Sabbath observance, sacrifices, purifications, his food, his clothing, fasts and tithes, that at every turn, in every little circumstance of life, his nationality and his religion were brought prominently before him. In all their outward observances, too, the Pharisees themselves were scrupulously exact. What wonder then, that having preserved intact the "remnant" of prophecy, this aristocrat, this patriot, this zealous stickler for the law, should enter God's Temple with a sense of proprietorship, and proudly elbow his way to the first place, and, standing, thank his God that he was not as the rest of men! Was he not God's champion against the heathen dogs, and the extortioners and unjust and adulterers of his own race? Did he not fast twice a week and give alms of all that he possessed? With half such good reasons, I repeat, any one of us would give way to self-congratulation, and of us as of the Pharisee would be true the words of the Spirit to the Church of Laodicea: "Thou sayest: I am rich and wealthy and have need

of nothing, and knowest not that thou are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." For no man is a judge in his own cause, not because he has not within him a voice to call him to account, but because that voice, conscience, is apt to be stilled or perverted by self-love and self-conceit. In examining ourselves we find it hard to be strictly honest, to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, to admit that a beam in the eye is a beam indeed and not a mere mote. And even when we do succeed fairly well in extracting all the evidence for and against, we still decide the case according to a standard all our own, and the prisoner in consequence is honorably acquitted or even highly commended. Sin, too, is something that is ever recurring, and the judge soon tires and grows lax with usage. Favorable self-judgments, I have said, are usually erroneous, and, in a measure, the same is true of all self-judgments. Even the publican's estimate of himself was just only in so far as it was self-depreciatory. Christ's commendation of him, that he went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee, is, you notice, more relative than absolute. Doubtless there were many other grades of society, the Gentiles, the harlots, the unclean, upon whom the publican, Jew as he was, would have looked as the Pharisee looked on him, and with his lips have thanked God and in his heart have thanked himself, as did the Pharisee, that he was not as some other men. Or perhaps his self-depreciation, like the Pharisee's complacency, was based on the notion that outward observance is

the whole law and the prophets. We look upon the tomb's exterior and we call it foul or fair, according as it appears to us, but few of us have the moral courage to enter in and bring to light the hidden dead men's bones. The Pharisee, having told what vices he had not, proceeded to enumerate his virtues, and many of us, like him, are content with avoiding heinous sins, or with the easy outward forms of religion, to the utter neglect of the more difficult interior sanctification. Sanctity means more than that. The rich young ruler, that would-be Apostle, soon learned his mistake, and was so frightened that he sadly turned away. To judge rightly of ourselves we must look at God, and seeing ourselves in His righteousness as in a spotless mirror, we will realize that whatever of good we do comes from Him, for by His grace we are what we are, and that whatever of evil is in us—and who shall estimate it?—is all our own. We will see then that like the Apostles on the Lake of Galilee we labor through the night of life, unprofitable servants, taking nothing, and in the presence of our God and in very terror at our unworthiness we will fall down before Him as did St. Peter, crying: "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man," or supplicating Him in the words of the publican: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Brethren, we learn from the parable, secondly, how mistaken are usually our opinions of others. If, as St. Paul testifies, no man knows whether he be praiseworthy or blamable before God, if neither Cain nor Abel knows which is God's favorite until

the heavenly fire descends, is it not rash to anticipate God by sitting in judgment on one another? Self-judgment is nothing more than the examination of one's conscience, a sacred duty incumbent on every Christian, a powerful incentive to repentance, and a valuable aid in the production of the proper dispositions for prayer. It is of self-examination that St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says: "If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged," for such salutary effects would this exercise produce in us that we would thereby escape God's weightier condemnation. But would we thereby escape human criticism? Alas! the more virtuous a man is the more fault will be found with him, and the cavilings of his critics will be bitter in proportion to their wickedness. The vicious resent goodness in others as a personal reproach. "Let us," say they (Wis. ii), "let us lie in wait for the just because he is contrary to our doings, upbraideth us with transgressions of the law, and divulgeth against us our sins. He is become a censurer of our thoughts, grievous to us even to behold, for his life is not like other men's, and his ways very different. He esteemeth us as triflers and abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and glorieth that he hath God for his Father. Let us examine him by outrages and tortures, that we may know his meekness and try his patience, and let us condemn him to a most shameful death." Ah, Brethren, what a commentary on human nature is this; what a picture of that malice which could torture and crucify even the irreproachable, the loving and gentle Saviour. We

are by nature fault-finders and detractors. "Whereunto shall I esteem this generation?" says Christ. "They are like children sitting in the market-place, who, crying to their companions, say: We have piped to you and you have not danced; we have lamented and you have not mourned. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say: He hath a devil: the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say: Behold a man that is a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

Even when uninfluenced by envy or hatred or race prejudice or religious bigotry, our opinions of others are likely to be superficial and wrong. "Man looketh upon the outward appearance." Who of us, were he present that day in the porch of the Temple, would have hesitated for an instant as to the respective merits of the Pharisee and the publican? Would we not, in the words of St. James, have deferred to the proud Pharisee with his golden ring and his fine apparel and his stately self-importance, and said to him: "Sit thou here well;" and to the humble publican in his mean attire would we not have answered roughly: "Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool!" For the publicans were Jewish traitors who had sold themselves into the service of their Roman conquerors, for whom they harvested the public revenues, and such was their genius for avarice and extortion that their name soon became a synonym for all that was base and despicable. Even Christ classes them with harlots. I know nothing in modern soci-

ety to which they may be more appropriately compared than to an Irish land-grabber, or a "scab" workman during a strike, or a soldier who betrays his country's military secrets to the enemy. An orthodox Jew, a Pharisee, could no more see good in a publican than can I in the vilest proprietor of a combined saloon and brothel. And yet this man, this publican, went down to his house justified rather than the other. Ah, Brethren, there is enough there to deter me for the rest of my days from ever presuming to pass judgment on my neighbor. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart—and He resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." No judgment of one man by another can ever be infallible; the more severe it is, the more likely it is to be false; and even when it is favorable, there is still danger of error, as we see in the opinion nine-tenths of humanity would have conceived of the Pharisee. No man nor set of men are above reproach, and no man nor set of men are utterly beneath praise. St. Paul himself tells us that he was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee, and SS. Matthew and Zacheus had both been publicans. Two classes of society which produced such material, and which besides, as we read in the Acts, sent hundreds of their members into the early Christian Church, could not have been wholly bad. Judge not, therefore, and ye shall not be judged, but if you persist in passing condemnatory sentences on your fellowman, be sure you will make such glaring mistakes and work such mischief, that God's condemna-

tion will come heavy upon you. "Judge not and ye shall not be judged."

Lastly, Brethren, the parable teaches how much at variance usually are the judgments of man and the judgments of God. They are generally as different as the grounds on which they are based; as different as was the Pharisee's fair exterior from his proud, uncharitable, sinful soul, or the publican's unpromising aspect from his humble and contrite heart. For God is not concerned with the outward appearances of things, nor is His knowledge, like ours, acquired slowly and with much labor and easily forgotten. See what a weary process has to be gone through with in a court of justice that one little case may be decided, one little wrong righted, and consider how often even then justice miscarries and the innocent are punished and the guilty freed. And if decisions so laboriously arrived at frequently prove false, what of opinions formulated in a moment? But with God, to exist is to know, and so penetrating and so comprehensive is the scope of His vision that all creatures, all events, all men from time's beginning to time's end are ever present before Him; aye, even our very motives regarding which we manage so often and so egregiously to deceive ourselves. "Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off," says the Psalmist, (Psalms i. 38), "Thou hast foreseen all my ways. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, whither flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven Thou art there, if I descend into hell Thou art present, and in the uttermost parts of the sea. And I said: Perhaps darkness

shall cover me and night: but darkness shall not be dark to Thee, and night shall be light as day; the darkness and the light are alike to Thee." So long then as there exists such infinite disparity between God's omniscience and our feeble gropings after truth, so long must our opinions of ourselves and of others be subject to error and at variance with the judgments of God. "Judge not before the time, therefore, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise from God."

Brethren, the lesson of to-day, briefly stated, is this: First, to be very careful and timid in the expression of our opinions of our own or our neighbor's merits. Secondly, to remember always that whatever be the state of the case, the prayer "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner" is more pleasing to the ears of God than an act of thanksgiving that we are not as the rest of men. And, finally, that the more intimately we come into communion with God the greater will be our sense of our own unworthiness, and the more hope will there be that He will have mercy and forgive. "For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost.

THE NECESSITY AND PROPER METHOD OF PRAYER.

"*And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.*"—Mark vii. 35.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Ceremonies of Baptism. II. Epistle of to-day. III. Effects of prayer.
I. Necessity as to justification: 1. Scripture. 2. Pray always. 3. Only thorough remedy.
II. Necessity as to perseverance: 1. Prosperity and adversity. 2. Thabor. 3. Natural remedy.
III. Parts: 1. Preparation and study. 2. Contemplation and thanksgiving. 3. Petition.
Per.: Prayer and its parts exemplified in incidents of the Gospel.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, in the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism, the Church employs those selfsame ceremonies which Christ originated in the cure of the blind and of the deaf and dumb. Moistening his fingers with saliva the priest touches the infant's senses, saying meanwhile: "Be thou opened," to indicate that by the grace of Baptism God will open these eyes to His heavenly truths, and these ears to His holy admonitions, and that He will loosen this tongue to speak His praises. It was with this idea in mind that the Church assigned St. Paul's profession of faith to be the epistle of to-day. But, alas! the sacramental grace of Baptism is often thwarted, and the spiritual inertness of babyhood brought back by sin, so that the soul stands once more before God

blind and deaf and dumb. It is evident from the text that the mute of to-day's Gospel had at one time enjoyed the use of speech, but that, having through accident or sickness lost his hearing, he had become partially, if not wholly, dumb. He is a perfect figure of a Christian soul in sin, and his miraculous cure is but the outward form of those innumerable miracles of grace, those conversions which God effects in response to prayer. "They brought to Him one that was deaf and dumb, and they besought Him that He would lay His hand upon him." To my mind, the Gospel message to-day is the necessity and the proper method of prayer; prayer for others and prayer for ourselves, that frequently turning aside with Jesus from the multitudes, our eyes may be opened to see, and our ears to hear, and our tongues loosed, to proclaim the wonderful works of God.

Brethren, though fasting and prayer go hand in hand, still of the two, prayer is the more important, for while fasting ceases on festivals, prayer becomes more insistent. And of the two forms of prayer, oral and mental, the latter is the higher, for by reason of our inconstancy, oral prayer is always in danger of degenerating into lip service, whereby men vainly seek to honor God while their hearts are far from Him. The brief, but fierce and noisy, thunderstorm is more destructive than productive, but the silent, steady, gentle downpour renews the face of the earth. Nothing is more insisted on in Scripture than the necessity of prayer: "Let nothing hinder you from praying always" is the constant cry of the

Holy Spirit. "You that are mindful of the Lord," says Isaias, "hold not your peace, nor give Him silence." "Seven times a day I praised the Lord," says the man after God's own heart. Christ's frequent retreats to solitude, and His long vigils on the mountain-side could have had no other object than to emphasize this truth. "Watch and pray," He says, and by diverse parables He showed that we ought to pray always and not to faint, and St. Paul insists again and again that we should "continue in supplications and prayers night and day." A prayerful spirit, in fact, is an essential characteristic of Christianity, for, says the prophet: "By all the nations shall My house be called a house of prayer." Nor will it do to say that for the virtuous to work is to pray, and that thus they are ever fulfilling this precept. The parables of the troublesome widow and the importunate friend at the baker's door show that real prayer is meant. The true sense, therefore, is that we must recognize prayer as one of the greatest duties of life, consecrate to it every day some time with which lesser concerns should never be allowed to interfere, and resume it at all times whenever possible. Did the love-sick youth but give to God the love he wastes on a creature, would not his prayer be constant, would not his heart be ever where his treasure is? Could we but realize our beggarly destitution, our utter helplessness and dependence on God in all our temporal and spiritual needs, would it not come as natural to us to lift our hands and voices in prayer for our daily bread as it does to

the unfledged to cry for the mother bird? In spiritual matters, beggars are rich, and the self-sufficient miserably poor, for unless we ask, we need not hope to receive. Why is it that so many practical Catholics make such little progress in the spiritual life, if not that they have failed to master, or neglect, the art of praying well? They remove their sins as they do their hair or beard, leaving the roots for another growth. Fasting, alms and such are but external remedies for sin, but our soul's maladies are from within, and prayer alone can penetrate and cleanse the heart. Life, spiritual as well as physical, comes from the heart. A heart inflamed with love softens and glorifies the entire system as does the heat the iron, and the fuel of this fire is prayer. By prayer our nature is transfigured, becoming white and glittering as did Christ on Thabor. Take a lesson from the falcon. In the moulting season he seeks a warmer climate, and flaps his wings and the old feathers fall and the new begin to grow. So we, to put off the old man and put on the new, must seek the Sun of Justice, and basking in the rays of His love, lift our hands to Him in frequent, earnest prayer.

Brethren, prayer is necessary, not only in begetting, but in preserving sanctity. By the same medicine health is restored and prolonged. Worldly prosperity and adversity powerfully influence our perseverance in good by engendering either presumption or despair. But the prayerful man is that happy mortal whom the philosopher compares to a

dice; fall as he may he always rests easily. So accustomed is he to dealing with the great things of God, that the little affairs of earth, be they good or bad, are to him matters of indifference. "He hath made the Most High his refuge, and no evil can come to him." Like God, he views our little world from afar, from a great height, and, appreciating the smallness of it, he passes imperturbable amid those ups and downs which sorely agitate the worldly. With St. Paul he "reckons that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come." For if St. Augustine, as he relates, was filled with disgust for all the pleasures of life by a brief conversation with his mother, Monica, how much more so he who habitually converses with God in prayer! The master sentiment of such a soul is well expressed in Peter's words on Thabor: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles," that, viz., leaving the world we may abide with Thee forever. Prayer alone, I repeat, can effect this blessed result. For attachment to earthly things is but the innate love of the human heart gone astray, and such a heart is more easily led back by natural than by violent means. *Similia similibus curantur.* Fasting, alms, and such like works of penance are bitter, violent remedies, but prayer is easy and natural, and so satisfies the cravings of the soul with heavenly consolations that it no longer yearns for worldly things. For the prayerful man abides in God, the all-good, and God in him. His soul, having chosen the better part of Mary, is

rewarded with a foretaste of the joys of heaven. Prayer is his Jacob's ladder, which keeps him in constant communication with God. It is the very heart of his religion, to which churches, altars, priests, etc., are but accessories. In religious work, prayer is an absolutely essential instrument, for whosoever have done great things for God or humanity, or raised themselves to eminent sanctity—all were men of prayer. In a word, the man devoid of prayer is more helpless even than the Gospel mute, and by prayer alone can his faculties be restored to speak and act aright.

Brethren, to realize prayer's necessity were futile without an earnest effort to master the proper method of prayer. "You ask," says St. James, "and you receive not, because you ask amiss." Granted, therefore, that the mind and heart are essential factors in our devotions, know that every prayer should consist of five parts: preparation, study, thought, thanksgiving, and petition. On a proper preparation depends almost the entire fruit of that holy exercise wherein we speak to God and God speaks to us. Were you spokesman of a committee sent to petition the President on some important subject, what care would you not give to the manner of your address! And will we, entering God's presence on a matter of infinite concern to ourselves, be less solicitous? Will not our boorishness pique the Lord's patience, or our slow stammering put His mercy to sleep? "Before praying," says the Holy Spirit, "prepare thy soul, and be not as a man that tempt-

eth God." When Satan dared Our Saviour to cast Himself from the Temple's pinnacle, Christ replied: "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, thy God." So, too, to pray without preparation is presumption of God's mercy, for it is tantamount to asking God to send His angels to sustain us without effort on our part, or even against our will. As the violinist, before playing, tunes his instrument, so a soul must be prepared ere its petitions can prove pleasing to the Lord. But how prepared? In two ways: first, by removing sin from the soul by contrition or through the Sacrament of Penance. We thus put off the shoes from our feet, as Moses did, to stand on holy ground, and see our God; we wash our raiment, as did the Israelites when going to meet their Lord. "And if," says Christ, "thou offer thy gift at the altar and there thou rememberest that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." "Be thou the first to declare thy iniquities," says Isaias, "that thou mayest be justified." It will not do to turn to God in prayer for pardon and blessings, while neglecting or forgetting the grievances others may have against us. "Thus shalt thou pray," says the Lord, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them their trespasses against us." "Forgive thy neighbor," He adds, "if he hath hurt thee, and then shall thy sins be forgiven thee when thou prayest." Secondly, we must enter God's majestic presence bowed in spirit, filled with the thought of His great-

ness, all intent on doing Him honor, and at the same time conscious of our own littleness; that in this mighty universe and amid the millions of angels and of men, past, present, and to come, we are indeed as a grain of dust or ashes. God hears the humble publican's prayer, but that of the proud Pharisee He rejects. The second part of prayer is study, that is, an effort of the imagination to bring before us vividly the person to whom our prayer is made. All prayers, even those directed to the holy souls, the blessed, the angels, or their Queen, should ultimately be addressed to God, for the answer, though it come through them, must come from Him. In this effort, the imagination is powerfully assisted by the study of Scripture, especially the Gospels. We thus become so conversant with the Saviour in every incident of His birth, life, Passion, death, and Resurrection, that in an instant by a simple act of our will we can easily place ourselves before Him as He appeared at that particular portion of His earthly career which most strongly appeals to us. This "composition of place," as St. Ignatius calls it, is the strongest known safeguard against distractions in prayer. Prayer's third element is thought or reflection, and for this third part no set rules can be assigned, for it will vary according to the present bent of each. So rich is the personality of Our Saviour, that in His life we find a parallel for our every temptation, want, trial, and affliction, and by comparing our little crosses with the cruel weight of His we learn patience and resignation to God's will; and His

ever-ready willingness to heal and comfort and save others, confirms our faith and reanimates our hope. But meditation, to be fruitful, must go deeper than the mind; the heart, too, must be waked to action. The mind should minister to the heart as does a nurse to a little child, collecting and preparing food for meditation, and masticating it herself before feeding it to her charge. But if the nurse not only masticate but swallow the food, her charge will starve and die. The will is, as it were, the customs officer at the city gate, but if instead of levying just toll he confiscate all merchandise, a famine in the city, in the heart, is sure to follow. To meditate with the mind alone as one might ponder a mathematical problem, would prove as barren of results as the labors of a huntsman whose dog should not only catch but devour the game, for the function of the mind is to discover and grasp the truth and lay it at the feet of its master, the heart. Nor can our heart's best emotions be elicited without much labor and great patience, for they are as green wood and must be set upon the fire of God's love long and closely ere sputtering resistance and clouds of smoke give place to clear flame. Yet prayer without emotion is labor as vain as that Our Lord described when He said: "And some seed fell upon a rock and as soon as it was sprung up it withered away because it had no moisture." The fourth part should be thanksgiving. Be our needs ever so great, be our prayer answered or not, we must never fail to return thanks to God, who knows our wants much better than we do ourselves.

"The Lord hath given," says holy Job, "and the Lord hath taken away; blest be the name of the Lord." "We must," says St. Paul, "give thanks alway for all things." The fifth and last part of prayer is petition. Our appeal to God must include a request for light to know our real needs, temporal and spiritual. "Thou sayest," says St. John, "that thou art rich and are made wealthy and have need of nothing, and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Having tried to see our own and our living and dead neighbor's wants as God sees them, our prayer for help must be made; first, with implicit trust in God's power and willingness to relieve them. "Whatsoever you ask when you pray," says Christ, "believe that you shall receive and they shall come unto you." Secondly, with humility, for "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." Thirdly, with the perseverance of the widow seeking justice, of the friend wishing to purchase bread, of the woman of Chanaan, or of St. Paul, who thrice asked the Lord for the selfsame favor. Lastly, with fervor, for unless the incense be dropped on the fire it will not ascend to the Lord. The fiery chariot is the only vehicle to heaven. But if, when all is over, the particular object of our prayer be still denied us, let us finish with the words: "Thy will be done," confident of having been heard by Him who seeth in secret what things are really for our good, and who in secret shall reward us. The fact that He granted the devil's request to enter the swine and refused St.

Paul's appeal that Satan should depart from him, is not a proof that Paul's prayer was unheard, for God knew that temptations borne and baffled by His grace would win for Paul a crown of glory.

Brethren, the necessity of prayer and its component parts are all exemplified in the Gospel of to-day. The man was deaf and dumb, but they, having studied Christ's miracles and meditated on His power and goodness, came and begged Him earnestly, confidently, perseveringly, to lay His hand upon him. And Jesus promptly answered them by healing the man's infirmities, so that they all cried out in a chorus of thanksgiving: "He hath done all things well; He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost.

THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE.

"*Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?*"—Luke x. 25.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Christ on Olivet. II. Leo's teaching. III. Directory to life eternal.
I. Instruction: 1. Roman Christians. 2. Leo's sequence. 3. Bible as book.
II. Patience and consolation: 1. Resignation. 2. Virtue in infirmity. 3. The saints.
III. Glory: 1. Sick member. 2. Christ present. 3. The saints again.
Per.: 1. Importance as to—1. Life eternal. 2. Temporal. 3. Patience and consolation.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, a few Sundays ago, if you remember, we read in the Gospel how Christ wept over Jerusa-

lem, foretold its destruction, and drove from the Temple them that sold therein and them that bought. In that Gospel, short as it was, we discerned three strong arguments against the anti-Christian spirit of our times—three convincing proofs of Christ's divinity. Now, taking that Gospel as an example of the power of the Scriptures, as a weapon with which to defend truth and vanquish error, we drew for conclusion that lesson Leo XIII. is so anxious should be taught and learned, viz., how useful, how necessary, how sacred a duty it is for each to have his Bible, and to read it occasionally. To-day I wish to still further emphasize this lesson—to show you the value of the Scriptures not only as an intellectual weapon, but especially as a prolific source from which may be derived the strength, the guidance, the suggestive inspiration necessary to bring a human soul through life to God. Were one of you to arise and ask with the lawyer: "What must I do to possess eternal life?" I would answer in Christ's own words: "What is written in the law—in the Scriptures? How readest thou?" For, says St. Paul to the Romans: "What things soever were written, were written for our instruction, that through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope unto life everlasting."

Rich with meaning are these words of St. Paul. The Romans, whom he addressed, were a newly converted people—a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, that did not mingle very well—for the Jews looked with suspicion on the apparent laxity of the Gentiles;

while the Gentiles, on the other hand, despised the Jews for their observance of the obsolete customs of the Old Law. Hence St. Paul's epistle to them is primarily a plea for Christian unity, wherein he recommends the study of the Scriptures as the great unifier of Christianity. And taking his own epistle as an example, especially the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters, I know no more appropriate reading for the two great divisions of Christianity at the present day. "But thou," he says to one party, "why judgest thou thy brother; or thou," to the other, "why dost thou despise thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." From St. Paul and from the Scriptures generally we learn a Christlike spirit of forbearance, so that the most erring Judas receives from us not the Pharisaical: "What is that to us; do thou see to it," but rather a hearty greeting as friend and brother. And it is characteristic of the foresightedness of Leo XIII. that he gives this power of the Scriptures for Christian unity its true value. In one of his latest encyclicals there is a logical sequence wherein, beginning with the subject nearest his heart—the working man, the labor question—he advocates a union of Christendom as the only means of solving that problem, and recommends the study of the Scriptures as the surest method of bringing disunited Christians together.

"What things soever were written," says St. Paul, "were written for our instruction." In this age of the writing mania and cheap literature, there are books innumerable, not, unfortunately, all written for

our instruction, and none of which, even the best, deserve the name, if compared with *the* Book—the Scriptures. For the Bible is the Book of books, having God for its Author, and for its matter a subject worthy of Him—God Himself. It differs from and is superior to all others in that it has a double sense, the literal and the spiritual. As a history it is the most universal of all—beginning by the very cradle of humanity, following its past vicissitudes and illumining its future path through all time with the search-light of prophetic vision. It is at once a repository of history, art, science, and literature. The history, not of the rise and fall of this city or that—this nation or that, but of the building up and tearing down of the universe. Its preaching seeks to excite emotions more than human—divine. Philosophic speculation reaches to the highest stars, but the Scriptures lead us higher still, to the very throne of God. There we find, too, the sciences—medicine, dealing not merely with the ills of the body but with the wounds of the soul; and law, interpreting for us God's last will and testament, and settling our heirship to the kingdom of heaven. Nothing human is perfect. No merely human agent, be he ever so great or holy, but can strike his breast and say: "I have sinned—forgive me my trespasses," and even Homer sometimes nods; but the Bible recounts the achievements of God whose works are perfect, and so perfect is the style of the original that to assert there is even one useless word in its pages, is called by St. Basil downright blasphemy.

"What things soever were written, were written for our instruction, that through patience and the consolation of the Scriptures, we might have hope unto life everlasting." Patience and consolation; patience and consolation—patience in bearing with others, and the consolation of having others bear patiently with us, so that reading the Scriptures with faith, we learn mutual charity and so hope unto life everlasting. But, "patience and consolation" have here a still deeper meaning. They give us the double secret of Christian resignation taught in the Bible from Genesis to the Apocalypse and embodied first in St. Paul's words: "All that wish to live piously in Christ must suffer persecution," and secondly in the words of the Psalmist: "I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him and I will glorify him." No cross, no crown; through a gloomy Good Friday must we go to a glorious Easter Day, for every true disciple must take up his cross and follow the Master. Nay, the more holy one is, the more tribulation he experiences, for Christ says: "The branch that bears fruit I will prune, that it may bear fruit the more." Through many tribulations men enter into the kingdom of heaven. And why? First, because man wills it, and secondly, because God ordains it. The good and the bad in this world are like fire and water. You plunge a live coal into water—the temperature of the water is raised and the coal is extinguished. So, too, the brighter virtue shines in this world, the hotter grows the angry persecution of the wicked to dim its lustre. No where, not even in the little band

of Apostles, will you find the good without the wicked, and everywhere they conflict, because, says Christ, "The world loves its own, but since you are not of this world, therefore does the world hate you." This, besides being natural, is a divine dispensation. For, above all things, God desires His disciples to preserve the spiritual goods with which He endows them, and who is ignorant that virtue is often lost in prosperity and perfected in infirmity? A straight column is stronger the heavier load it bears, but the crooked gives way under the strain. Saul the shepherd, was an innocent lad; but Saul the king, was a villain. King David when deposed and a miserable fugitive, could pardon his would-be assassin, but, restored to his throne, he murdered his most devoted servant. So it ever is; the lot of the virtuous is affliction. The Patriarchs were virtuous, and their wandering lives were a series of miseries, threatened or experienced; the prophets were virtuous, and see the tortures they endured and the deaths they died; the Apostles were Christ's own, and St. Paul tells us they were treated as the refuse of this world and the off-scouring of mankind; and as for Christ the God of virtue—the crucifix is the history of His life.

"But the Scriptures," says St. Peter, "foretell not only the sufferings that are in Christ but the glories that should follow." "I am with him," says the Holy Spirit, "in tribulation, I will deliver him and glorify him." Where virtue is there is affliction; and where affliction is patiently borne, there are God's sweetest consolations. "Blessed are they that mourn," says

Our Lord, "for they shall be comforted." If a particular portion of the human body is wounded, the blood quickly rushes thither, and the whole man is soon so concerned about that particular member as to seem to have forgotten about the others. So, too, you recollect how, long ago, when your brother or sister was taken ill, your father and mother and the entire household danced attendance on him or her until, possibly, your little breast was filled with envy and you said to yourself, "What a blessed thing it is to be sick!" Now, each of us is a member of Christ's mystical body, and He loves each so intensely that, without Him, not even a hair of our head can fall to the ground. Hence, I say, He is with us in tribulation, and the greater the tribulation the more evident His presence. The world dearly loves the rich and the happy, while the poor and wretched vainly cry to it for justice, but God is the Father of the orphan and the Judge of the widow, and the only source of true consolation. Brethren, were there no other lesson than this in all the Bible, it would still preserve its full claim to our attention as a masterpiece of wisdom. For happiness here or hereafter is essentially every man's pursuit, and here in this lesson we have the secret of true happiness. St. Andrew rejoicing at the sight of his cross; St. Stephen praying for his murderers; St. Lawrence smiling at his tormentors from amid the flames; St. Theodore complaining only when his torturers desisted; all these and thousands of such like cases are inexplicable to one who has not studied the Scriptures and mastered their prevailing

idea. Their prevailing idea, I repeat, for patience and consolation are the underlying thoughts that run through them all from cover to cover. Daniel in the den of lions; Jonas in his novel prison-house; Susanna between infamy and death; the three youths in the fiery furnace; and Job, destitute, friendless, and afflicted—these are but a few of the cases wherein we find God's promise fulfilled: "I am with him in his affliction; I will deliver him and I will glorify him."

Brethren, if what things soever are written in the Sacred Scriptures are written for our instruction, there must be a corresponding obligation on our part to read and study them. From these sacred pages we learn what we must do to possess life eternal. From them we learn, too, how to make our temporal life endurable. Be our specialty history, science, art, or literature, we will find in the Bible ample matter for our study and entertainment. In it, also, we will find the key to the solution of the principal problems that confront the Christian world to-day. And travelling, as we are, through this world, falling often among its thieves and suffering at their hands, we will learn from the Scriptures the comforting presence of Him who enables us to bear wrongs patiently; or if the more fortunate, we learn how to be the Good Samaritan to some less fortunate brother. Thus profiting by the things written for our instruction, through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, we will have reason, indeed, to have "hope unto life everlasting."

The Feast of the Assumption.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD.

"Jesus entered into a certain town, and a certain woman, named Martha, received Him into her house."—Luke x. 38.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Mary's lowliness. II. Assumed, soul and body. III. Mary and Martha.
I. House built on faith: 1. One rock. 2. Indivisible. 3. Firm.
II. Walled with hope: 1. Sustaining. 2. True. 3. Practical.
III. Roofed with charity: 1. Mary's love. 2. Waiting. 3. Proofs of glorious assumption.
Per.: Exhortation to Faith, Hope, and Charity.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, the feast of the Assumption, celebrated last week, gives us for a subject this morning one of whom I love to speak, and one whose praises you love to hear—Mary, our Virgin Mother. As we struggle on through the spiritual life—on through temptation and sin—we naturally look for guidance and encouragement to those that have gone before. We look at Christ, and our souls recoil from the task of imitating Him; we look at the saints, and weak human nature rebels against the austerities they endured—and often, God knows how often! we are tempted to give up the struggle in sheer despair. But then we turn to Mary, and there we find consolation and support. For she—that little village maiden—she was neither God nor angel but a poor mortal like ourselves, the lowliest of the low—who trod our earth and hungered and thirsted as we do. Through

the chilly winter and the sweltering summer, bearing her share of human ills, she lightly tasted our joys and drank deep of our woes. She is now high above the earth and skies—nearest to the throne and dearest to the heart of God. And not her soul alone, but her body too, has attained this exalted dignity, so that we hear her described by St. John as the "Woman [body and soul] clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of stars." And who, I ask, hath so exalted her? Her divine Son. And why? The Gospel of the feast tells us why, where it says: "One day Jesus entered into a certain town, and Mary and Martha received Him into their house." For Mary the contemplative and Martha the solicitous are together but a figure of this Virgin Mary, who received her Lord into the house of her virginal womb, when He came to His own and His own received Him not. Hence, since she made Him King of her house and her all here on earth, He, with equal hospitality, makes her Queen of His celestial mansions in heaven.

But what, you ask, was that house into which the Virgin Mary received her Lord here below? "The house of God," says St. Augustine, "is founded on faith, is built of hope, and roofed in with charity." The spiritual mansion into which the Virgin received her Lord, had for its foundation, faith; for its walls, hope; and for its roof, charity. That is why the Church, in the prayer of the feast of the Assumption, prays the almighty and eternal God to give us an increase of faith, hope, and charity, that by receiving

Him into a spiritual abode here on earth, we may be received by Him into the mansions of bliss, hereafter in heaven.

Faith, therefore, was the foundation of the spiritual mansion in which Mary received her Lord, and we, too, if we wish Him to visit and abide with us, must build Him an abode founded on faith. "Without faith," says St. Paul, "it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him." This foundation must be laid, not on the earth or the shifting sand, but on the firm rock, and that rock is Christ Jesus. "No one," says St. Paul, "must lay any other foundation but that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus." Heretics and Jews and even Pagans believe in the doctrine of good works, and some even have a smattering of faith, but still they do not please God, because their faith is not the faith of Christ. Our Lord does not dwell with them, because the abodes they offer Him are unstable structures with false foundations. But if perchance they believe in Christ still do they err in rejecting from their faith Christ's earthly Vicar. For although it is forbidden to lay any foundation but that already laid, Christ Jesus, yet Christ is, as it were, the solid bed of rock and Peter is the first stone laid thereon by Christ Himself when He said: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church." For we receive revealed truths relying on the infallibility of Christ; and when question arises which truth is revealed and which is not, we look for answer to Peter or his suc-

cessor, to whom Christ gave authority to decide when He said: "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not, and you being confirmed in the faith, confirm the brethren." Nor must we reject a single truth from the faith of Christ—the foundation must be as broad as truth itself, else the superstructure erected thereon will be too small for the indwelling of the Lord. Our faith must be as lively as was Mary's, which merited from St. Elizabeth that high encomium: "Blessed art thou that hast believed, because these things shall be accomplished in thee that were spoken to thee by the Lord," because, being but a simple village maiden she readily answered to the angel's salutation of Mother of God: "Be it done unto me according to thy word." Our faith must be as self-sacrificing as was hers when, like another Abraham, she stood by and saw her only Son immolated to the will of His Father. Finally, our faith must be as firm as hers when she refused to accompany the other women to her Son's tomb, knowing well that the Lord was not there, but was already risen.

Faith, therefore, is the foundation. And as the walls rise from the foundation, so from faith rises hope, ever higher and higher, ever nearer and nearer, to God. Here I speak of a hope as strong and firm as was Mary's—a hope of which Isaias says: "They who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint"—a hope that sustains us as it sustained Mary through all the

trials and hardships of this life, with the blessed prospect of enjoying God forever hereafter in heaven. Nor must we mistake false hope for the true—we must not be content with the hope of the fickle or the unjust. Of the former we read in the book of Wisdom that it is as "the smoke that is scattered by the wind, or as the recollection of a passing guest." In other words, there is nothing firm or lasting in the hope of the unjust—as the smoke goes through the chimney and then disappears, so the hope of the sinner goes with him through life, and no further, while the hope of the just rises to the very throne of God. Finally, our hope must be practical like Mary's, for God has commanded us not only to hope in the Lord but also has said: "Hope in the Lord and do good."

Over the foundation and the walls of our spiritual mansion we lay the roof of charity—charity, whose proper function it ever is to shield and to cover—charity, which holds the highest place among the virtues; and charity was possessed by Mary in an eminent degree. For if the highest charity knows not fear, look at Mary among the soldiers at the foot of the cross and learn how much she loved. If to lay down one's life for one's friend is the supreme test of love, judge the extent of Mary's love who gave up her only Son, dearer to her than life, and that, too, for His enemies and her own.

Such was the temple of faith, hope, and charity that Mary erected to her Lord, and therefore did He choose her for a habitation for Himself—and since Christ has promised that whosoever ministers

to Him on earth shall be honored by His Father in heaven, therefore was the Virgin, at the close of her life, taken up to Christ's heavenly house and made the queen thereof. We can imagine how she spent her time after the Resurrection of Our Lord, visiting again each spot hallowed by His presence; visiting the homes of His youth and manhood, and going over the sad scenes of His Passion and death and burial, while all the time she sighed in spirit to be dissolved and go to God. As the stag thirsts after the fountains of water, so did her soul long for God. At length the happy day came when she heard the summons: "The winter is passed, and the snow is melted and gone; arise, My beloved, and come." Because she was a poor child of Eve like ourselves, and so subject to the death from which not even her Son was exempt, therefore at the call of God she sank into the painless sleep of death. But not for long, for though it is a general law of humanity that each soul, on coming, find a body here and, departing, leave that body behind, still neither the King of men nor the Queen His Mother, are bound by the laws framed for their subjects. Hence, just as Christ arose body and soul, after three days, from the dead, so Mary, after a brief space, arose body and soul and was assumed into the home of her Father. For how can I believe that that body of Mary which bore and nourished the Saviour Himself—that body, of which Christ's body was bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh—that body which is so intimately connected with Christ my

Lord that His flesh and blood in the Holy Sacrament of the altar can almost be said to be the flesh and blood of Mary herself—how, I say, can I believe that that body was one of those of whom God said: "Dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return"? Or if it did return to dust; if it awaits, like other mortals, the general resurrection, is it not reasonable to suppose that God would have done as much for it as He has for so many others of the saints, and miraculously preserved it from corruption and decay? The Catholic mind, instinctively almost, rejects the thought that the body of Mary—the temple of the Lord—should ever be the food of worms, but believes, rather, that it was preserved as free from corruption as was the soul that animated it. Now if it was so preserved, where, I ask, does it now rest? The whole world knows where lie the bodies of the Apostles and the principal saints, but who will tell us where lies the body of Mary? Surely it is unreasonable to suppose that almighty God, while providing, in a wonderful manner, for the preservation and veneration of the bodies of His saints, should allow the body of that saint of saints—His own Mother—either to return to the dust from which it sprung or to lie in an unknown and an unhonored grave. No. I prefer, rather, to believe what our Catholic faith suggests, and what reason and the traditions of our Church confirm, that soon after Our Lord entered into the home of His eternal rest, turning to His Mother He said with the Psalmist: "Enter thou, also, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy sanctification." As Solomon,

who was a figure of Christ, introduced the ark of the Covenant into the temple of God amid the rejoicings and thanksgivings of the entire people, so did Christ introduce into heaven, Mary, body and soul; Mary, the ark of the New Covenant, amid the joyful acclaims of the whole heavenly court. Who can imagine the splendor of that scene—the myriads of the angels and the blessed whom eye hath not seen; the sweet strains of their celestial chant which ear hath not heard; and the glory of her divine Son which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive! And who shall describe the emotions of Mary as, standing by her Son, glorified and immortal, she compares the misery of the past with the joy of the present; her former lowliness with her present exalted dignity! The wound made by the sword of sorrow that pierced her heart is now healed by the blessed balm of heavenly peace—and the obscurity that has hitherto enshrouded her is now dispelled by the voice of God proclaiming through heaven: "Come forth, ye daughters of Sion, come forth and see your Queen with the diadem wherewith her Son hath crowned her."

Brethren, if we wish one day to imitate the Virgin Mary in her glorious Assumption; if we desire to enter the kingdom of God, into the rest and the joy of Our Lord, to do homage to our crowned Queen, we must first learn to imitate the example of her life. Our faith must be strong and not carried hither and thither by every new doctrine; our hope must be firm, having for its object not the uncertainty of worldly things but the living God; and our charity must be

of that true kind described by St. Paul when he says: "Let us love one another not in tongue or in word, but in deed and in truth." We must build, as Mary did, a spiritual abiding-place for the Lord in our souls, and as we go on building it we should always remember that, of ourselves, we can never complete it—because, unless the Lord build the house they labor in vain who build it. Hence we should frequently pray Our Lord to assist us with His grace and Mary to help us with her prayers in following their example and virtues. Thus we will erect a temple to the Lord as near as possible after the pattern of Mary's, and like her, we will experience the twofold joy of having Our Lord abide in our souls continually here on earth, and being permitted to abide with Him forever, hereafter, in heaven. Amen.

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

THE GRACE OF PERSEVERANCE.

"Jesus answering said: Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine?"—Luke xvii. 17.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Jesus in Samaria. II. Lepers. III. Cure.
I. Ingratitude: 1. Penances of saints. 2. Obedience, gratitude, prejudice. 3. Simon.
II. Perseverance: 1. Gift of God. 2. Definition. 3. Solomon, Hazael, Moses.
III. Occasions of sin: 1. Trochilus, and Greeks. 2. Presumption. 3. Judith and Dina.
Per.: Kingdom of God is within us.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, my text recalls an incident of Our Lord's life, appropriate to this occasion, when per-

haps we need more than ordinarily to be reminded that conversion without perseverance is of little worth. He is passing through Samaria, bound for Jerusalem, accompanied by His disciples and the ever-present Pharisees. Hard by a town, He stands a little apart, looking down with mingled joy and sadness on a man who, prone before Him, sobs out his thankfulness and embraces His feet with love and adoration. He is one of the ten poor lepers who an hour ago cried to the passing Saviour: "Jesus, Master, have pity on us." Afflicted with that loathsome disease, driven by law beyond town limits, forbidden to see, except at a distance, even their nearest and dearest, crouching in the sand-pits by night, and by day wandering dolefully among the tombs—ah! what pent-up misery of many weary years found vent in that cry: "Jesus, Master, have pity on us." And Jesus turning said to them: "Go, show yourselves to the priest and offer sacrifice according to the law." And as they went, lo! ere they reached the city gates their hideous deformity disappeared and their flesh became as the flesh of a little child. But were not ten made clean—nine Jews and one Samaritan? Where then are the nine? Alas! there is no one found to return and give glory to God but one, the stranger, the Samaritan.

Brethren, no cup of human joy is without its drain of sorrow. A shadow is on the Saviour's countenance and the Samaritan is presently shamefaced and apologetic. Earth's heroes climb the mount of glory, only to find other peaks towering above

them. In fact to realize ideals is to reduce them to the common. Even the saints of God amid their greatest spiritual triumphs often give way to sadness and self-reproach. They see things through God's eyes. They look over and beyond the little they have done, to the much more that might have been accomplished, or they gaze regretfully, as Jesus did, from their single selves at the Saviour's feet to the thankless nine so far from Him. This is the key to the incomprehensible humility and penances of the saints; it is the secret of Christ's habitual sadness. For the saints are not phenomena; rather theirs should be the normal standard for humanity. The adoring Samaritan is doing no more than was obviously his duty; the ungrateful nine on the other hand typify the great mass of men and women, each of whose lives is but a record of neglected opportunities. Ah! no wonder the Saviour is sad, and the lonely Samaritan ashamed. Were not God an all-sufficient substitute, the happiness of heaven even would not withstand that regretful query: "Where are the nine?" Where are the nine? He who was not repelled by their previous hideousness now gazes with pity and disappointment on their retreating forms. Indifference and ingratitude are more offensive, more hopeless than even downright sin. While lepers still, how piteously they cried to Him, how eagerly they longed, but dared not, to approach Him, and now, now that their cure is wrought, they turn their backs on Him. But did not He Himself command them to go before the priest and offer sacri-

fice? Was it not then more praiseworthy to follow His instructions to the letter rather than turn on being cured and rush back praising God? Read the answer in Christ's disappointed face. To turn to Him in adversity and forget Him in prosperity is not true love of God, nor is religion, pure and undefiled, content with merely keeping God's commands. The letter killeth but the spirit quickeneth. The Jewish idea of worship was formal externalism, empty ceremonial, with no regard for the emotions and the spontaneous outpourings of the heart. But the Lord looketh not on the outward appearance—the Lord looketh on the heart. Hence His disappointment in the nine. Not even the sudden change from the horrors of their outcast life to the unspeakable joy of having been cleansed could break the force of habit and bring them to His feet crying like children Abba, Father. They followed His directions to the letter and then selfishly hurried away to their kindred, for whose presence they had so long been hungering. Perhaps, too, their traditional contempt for everything Samaritan, though forgotten in affliction, broke out anew when health was returned, so that they were as eager to part with their companion as they were loath to follow his example. But he was hampered by no such prejudices and traditions. Immediately his disease dropped from him his one all-absorbing thought was thankfulness, and turning instantly he hurried back, crying glory to God, and flung himself adoringly at Jesus's feet. Brethren, looked at in a spiritual sense, which, think you, most

pleased the Saviour, which gave brighter promise of perseverance—the disobedient Samaritan or the obedient, but thankless, nine? There is another incident in Christ's life that answers that. Simon, the rich Pharisee, regardless of public opinion, one day invited the Nazarene to his house and table. His action was courageous, and Jesus by accepting tacitly commended him. But somehow the occasion was cold and formal. With all their courtesy and efforts to please, something was lacking—what? Love. And presently there rushes in from the street a woman—a converted harlot—who with passionate fervor casts herself at Jesus's feet. Immediately Simon orders the servants to eject her, but Jesus answers: "Nay, Simon, for I say to thee she hath honored Me more than thou. Thou gavest Me no water for My feet, nor oil for My head, nor the kiss of welcome, but she hath anointed My feet with precious ointment, and bathed them with her tears, and dried them with her hair, and kissed them again and again in the greatness of her love." Love, then, is the one thing necessary, of itself all-sufficient in God's eyes, and without which all else is nothing. Your mission, your conversion, has been made in vain, and will not endure if it has failed to fill your heart with love. But how are you to know? Well, now that your sinful leprosy is cured, are you serving God in outward form only or with your heart of hearts? Your human respect, your former hates and prejudices—do they remain? Is your aim merely to do the Father's bidding, or to gladden His heart by do-

ing something for Him without being told? When Jesus comes to you is your greeting as perfunctory as Simon's, or as loving as Magdalen's or the Samaritan's? On your answer, yes, or no, depends your perseverance.

Brethren, Christ speaking of Himself says: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." It is Catholic doctrine that as man cannot merit the grace of conversion, neither can he merit the grace of perseverance. Both are purely gifts of God. Hence St. Paul to the Philippians prays that God "who had begun a good work in them might perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus." So frail is human nature that though one may do a thing ever so well the chances are that he will not do it with equal perfection a number of times over. Hence all of us, even the most saintly, are sure to commit more or less venial faults. Exemption from that has been granted to one alone—the Virgin Mary. But it is not venial but mortal sins that turn us from God. Yet here, too, arises the selfsame difficulty. For though one may have sufficient grace to avoid all grievous faults, taken one by one, yet we may surely prophesy that the time will come when he will sin, and mortally sin, unless God fortify him with the grace of perseverance. Perseverance, therefore, is a special providence whereby God removes fatal temptations from our path, strengthens us in times of greatest peril, and brings our life to a close when naught else will suffice to save us. How utterly, therefore, do all from first to last depend on God!

How true it is that each should work out with fear and trembling his salvation! Solomon in all his glory once asked a Grecian sage: "Am I not the happiest of men?" but the other, shaking his head, replied: "Wait till I have seen the end." And oh, what a sad end was that! Solomon, type of Christ, model of faith and hope and love and wisdom, God's favorite among kings and men, so rich in merit that one would have expected him to pass bodily like Enoch or Elias from earth to heaven, yet Solomon fell and ended his days in lust and multiple idolatry. As frail as the flowers the Saviour compared him to, he was cut down suddenly and cast into the oven. What a contrast between that hoary-headed apostate and the radiant form of the young king in the Temple on the day of dedication! What a lesson for all of us, priest and people alike! When Hazael offered Eliseus presents the prophet wept, foreseeing the atrocities Hazael was soon to perpetrate. Many a confessor would weep, notwithstanding his penitent's evident sincerity, were he vouchsafed a look into that penitent's future. As Moses placed his hand in his bosom and drew it out covered with leprosy, so many a hand that beats its breast for sorrow comes away covered with sin. Watch ye, therefore, and pray—pray for strength against temptation, and for the grace of perseverance.

Brethren, I would not have you understand that our perseverance so depends on God as to free us from all responsibility. No, we have a part, a duty —which, briefly stated, is: to avoid the occasions of

sin. Plato's disciple, Trochilus, having barely escaped with his life from a shipwreck, ordered that all windows of his house looking seaward should be walled up, lest some day seeing it calm and beautiful he should again be tempted to go a-sailing. A valuable lesson this. How often spiritual shipwreck has overtaken us, and though we barely escaped by clinging to life-saving penance, yet next day, next week, we patched up our shattered bark and launched it forth again! Trochilus's philosophy may seem rigorous, but it has this merit that it coincides with the teaching of Christ. "When a strong man, armed, keepeth his court," says Christ, "those things which he possesseth are in peace." To feel secure against the devil, you must not only guard the inner apartments of your soul but also its outer court, and the moat and trench beyond, else the enemy will use your own defences for your undoing. The nearer he approaches, the harder it is to repel him. Aristotle beautifully illustrates this by citing the conduct of the Trojan senators. The Greeks were besieging Troy to get possession of Helen, and the senators in her absence wisely decided to give her up; but when she came before them they were so dazzled with her loveliness that they determined to defy the Greeks and fight them to the death. So, too, his powers of resistance desert the gambler in the gaming den, the drunkard in the saloon, and the lustful in the presence of a dissolute woman. Ah, how wickedly wise the devil is! When he tempted Christ he was not content with describing to Him, or showing Him on

a map all the kingdoms of the world that he promised Him; no, he took Him up into a high mountain and showed them to Him, hoping that an actual view of them and the glory thereof would cause the Saviour to fall down and adore him. How rash, then, and presumptuous it is for you who have but lately fled from sin to tread again the dark and crooked alleyways of vice, where every doorway hides a lurking demon, and every lighted window allures like the eyes of a lascivious woman. On what grounds do you justify such great self-confidence? Is it your invincible strength of will? Why, even St. Jerome confessed to Vigilantius that his reason for abandoning the haunts of men and seeking refuge in the wilderness was that he dared not trust himself amid the pitfalls of society. Have you achieved a mastery of yourself beyond St. Jerome? "They," says Ezechiel, "they who shall flee shall escape, and they shall be in the mountains like doves of the valley, all of them trembling." Physical valor and spiritual courage differ in this, that the former consists in pressing forward to the combat, but the latter, in fleeing from the enemy. And as when the gunshot echoes among the hills the flock of pigeons in the valley flutter to the mountain top and perch there, watchful and all trembling, so should converted souls act, who by God's grace are driven from the valley of death to the mount of holiness. The higher our station on the steep incline of sanctity, the more need there is for caution. It is unhappily true that in an instant one can pass from virtue down to vice, but alas! the op-

posite cannot be admitted, viz., that we can pass from vice to virtue instantly. "Facilis descensus Averni," sang the Pagan poet. No effort is required to tumble down the mount, but long and arduous is the return climb. Or is your reckless confidence based on God's power to save? Brethren, remember this, that God never uses extraordinary means to save a man who has at his disposal and neglects means ordinary but sufficient. This is the true meaning of the proverb that God helps those who help themselves. It is only in cases of absolute necessity that God accords us supernatural aid. Thus the Magi were led to Bethlehem by the star, but though on their return they were obliged to follow previously untrodden ways, yet the star most probably failed to reappear. So, too, though Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, still the bystanders were bidden to remove the stone from off the tomb and loose the bands from his hands and feet; and though the angel knocked the fetters from Peter's limbs, yet to Peter himself was left the donning of his clothes. True, God preserved the three young men in the fiery furnace, and the infant Moses adrift upon the Nile, and Daniel in the lions' den, but, mark you, in these and similar cases, the dangers did not result from personal caprice. He hath given His angels charge over us to keep us in all His ways—the ways of God and righteousness. If, however, we rashly brave the clefted rocks and yawning chasms of temptation we must not expect the hands of the Lord or His angels to bear us up. There is a remarkable differ-

ence between the fate of Judith and that of Jacob's daughter, Dina. Judith for a noble end braved the dangers of the Assyrian camp and the horrid orgies of Holofernes's court, studying the while to make herself incomparably lovely for the accomplishment of her design, yet God so kept her going forth and abiding there that she returned to Bethulia victorious and unstained. But Dina, when her father pitched his tent in a new land, Dina would fain steal forth to see the women of that country—how they looked, what finery they wore, and presently that innocent dove falls into the clutches of a rapacious hawk and returns to her father robbed of her virginity—irreparably dishonored. God will protect us amid dangers that seek us, but when we seek the dangers God leaves us to ourselves. Consider David, that man fashioned after God's own heart. He permits himself to gaze from his window on the beauty of Bethsabee, and immediately, abandoned by God, he plunges into adultery and homicide. If one clasp a reptile to his breast he must not, if bitten, expect sympathy from God or man, for: "Who," says Scripture, "who will pity an enchanter struck by a serpent?" It is a remarkable fact that whenever God forbids a thing He also forbids its near occasions. Thus our first parents were forbidden not only to eat the fruit, but even to touch it. The Israelites were forbidden not only to adore idols, but even to possess them, the Nazarites were forbidden not only to drink wine but to eat the grape. Christ, too, when reaffirming the commandments, forbade

not only the sinful deed but the longing glance, the interior passion, the foul thought, the covetous desire. Thus we are taught by God Himself that the secret of perseverance is to avoid the occasions of sin—that safety is found not in following the nine, but in joining the Samaritan at the feet of Christ.

Brethren, the Samaritan arises, the group breaks up, and the Pharisees approaching ask: "Master, when is the kingdom of God to come?" Christ answers: "The kingdom of God is within you." The nine, though outwardly restored are inwardly less godly than when they turned their hideous faces and raised their shrivelled hands appealingly to Christ, but the Samaritan has been transfigured through and through. Their transfiguration is in their flesh, which to-day is and to-morrow returns to dust, but his is a change of soul which will last forever and ever. It is our misfortune to be content with the appearances of sanctity, a fair exterior, but the critical eye of God goes deeper, it searches the reins and the heart. Brethren, whenever you say to God: "Thy kingdom come," remember that the kingdom of God is within you. A true, a lasting change of life must begin from within, and, working outward like the leaven, penetrate the entire mass of life's activities. This was Christ's meaning when He said to the cripple: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee," and then proceeded to cure his bodily infirmities. If, then, you once succeed in establishing permanently within you God's kingdom; if in all things you seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, be assured all other

things will be added unto you. You will no longer stray away from your Saviour, selfish, ungrateful, unforgiving. No longer will you, covered with moral leprosy, need to cry from afar: "Unclean, unclean," or, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on me," but turning from sin and its occasions, to Christ, you will hold Him fast here for a while, and hereafter in heaven forever and ever.

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

THE VALUE OF THE SOUL.

"Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and His justice and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matt. vi. 33.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Body and soul. II. Self-preservation. III. Sinners and saints.
I. Soul exists: 1. Image of God. 2. Life principle. 3. Truth and justice.
II. Soul's value: 1. Compared to world. 2. Christ's reply. 3. Riches, honors, pleasures.
III. In itself: 1. Richly endowed. 2. Devil's estimate. 3. God's estimate.
Per.: 1. Saints. 2. Single, married, old. 3. Worldling, drunkard, impure.

SERMON.

SEEK ye, therefore, first the eternal salvation of thine immortal soul, and a merciful God will provide all other things necessary for the temporal support of thy perishable body. In these words, my Brethren, is contained a brief résumé of the entire lesson of to-day's Gospel. Therein we are first tacitly reminded that every human being born into

this world is composed of a twofold element—of a body and of a soul—of a body that comes from the earth through our parents to us—and of a soul that comes, not from the earth, but comes directly from the hand of God—of a body that shall one day go down again to the dust from which it sprang—and of a soul that shall one day return to the bosom of its Creator. Each of these elements has its own wants and its own necessities, which, in obedience to Nature's first law of self-preservation, the composite man is bound to respect and provide for. The body demands its bodily food and drink and clothing, and the soul demands the spiritual food of Christ's flesh, and the spiritual drink of Christ's blood, and the spiritual clothing of God's divine grace. But according as men are more worldly or more spiritual, so are they more solicitous in providing for the wants of the body or of the soul, so that mankind is, and always has been, and ever will be, divided into two great classes—worldlings and saints—the votaries of the body and the votaries of the soul—the slaves of Mammon and the servants of God. Now, since, according to St. Paul, the law of the flesh is directly opposed to the law of the spirit; since "whosoever is not with Christ is against Him," therefore, I say, the worldling cannot be a saint and the saint cannot be a worldling, for no man can serve two masters; no man can at the same time serve God and Mammon. But alas, what a choice does man make! He prefers to serve the body that he seeth, rather than the soul that he seeth not. He forgets that his body is

a perishable thing like the grass of the field or the birds of the air, entirely subject, like them, to God's beneficent providence. He fails to realize that the service of his soul is, in importance, as far above the service of his body as is spirit above matter, as is heaven above earth. Hence Christ in to-day's Gospel cries out to mankind: "Two things, and two only, there are in this world of priceless value—God and thine own soul. Seek, therefore, first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all other things shall be added unto you."

Brethren, allow me this morning to follow out this sublime train of thought suggested by my divine Master. Let me speak to you of the value of the human soul. I want each one of you to ask himself three questions: First, have I a soul? Second, What is the value of my soul? Third, Does it appear from the life I am leading that I fully appreciate the value of my soul?

Have I a soul? Every Ash-Wednesday morning the priest sprinkles ashes on my head and says to me: "Remember, man, that thou art dust and into dust thou shalt return." "I heard a voice," says the Prophet Isaias, "I heard a voice saying to me, cry; and I said, Lord, what shall I cry? and it answered: All flesh is as grass and the flowers of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is not." "Man born of woman to-day," says holy Job, "liveth a short time and then fleeth away like a shadow—like a bird flying through the air, or a ship sailing through the water, he passeth away and leaveth not

a trace behind." What! when I die shall I cease to exist? Is there nothing in me more lasting than this clay body of mine? An ungodly science answers, "No; there is nothing." "I have dissected many a man," says a learned surgeon, "but I have never found a soul." But religion answers: "It is false." True science crys out, "I will not wholly die." The great human family assents I have a soul. We read in Genesis that God made man of the slime of the earth, to His own image and likeness did He make him. Now, is man's body an image of the living God? A clod of earth the image of a pure spirit—a mass of bone and flesh and blood the image of an angel! No; if man is like unto his God the likeness must be in that breath of life, which Genesis further tells us God breathed into the face of the new-made Adam. And that breath to be like God must, like Him, be a spirit; and to bear the stamp of the Blessed Trinity, it must have the three faculties of memory, understanding, and free will. Now that is exactly what I mean by a human soul; a pure spirit endowed with memory, understanding, and free will. My body, therefore, is dust, and into dust it shall return, but my soul is a spirit that came from God and shall return to God. My body was born of mortal woman, and like her shall die, but my soul was born of God, who liveth forever and ever. My soul is a spirit and invisible, and so cannot be seen by the doctor's eyes nor touched by his knife. Let me place a live man and a corpse side by side, and let me ask that learned physician wherein they differ. "One,"

he says, "has life, the other is dead." But what is life but the action of the soul in the body, just as the ringing of an electric bell is the action of the electricity in the metal. There is no life without a soul. The trees in my garden have souls—my horse and my dog have souls—and I? Oh, I am not inferior to them, I, too, have a soul. Aye, and a soul far nobler than theirs—not a mere vegetative soul like the tree, nor a mere animal soul like the dog, but a rational, an immortal soul. Their souls are imprisoned in their bodies, and so tightly locked in that when the prison-house of their body falls, prisoner and prison perish together; but my soul, though a prisoner in my body, is still unfettered, so that the destruction of my body brings to my soul, not death, but freedom. Hence it is that we hear St. Paul exclaim: "O God, I long for death that I may begin to live with Thee." The death of the body is only the beginning of the true life of the soul, for my soul is immortal—it can never die. For why do I fear death? Is it not because Nature has implanted in me an ardent desire to live forever? Most assuredly. Now Nature does not do things in vain. If there was no such thing as sound, she would not have given me ears to hear; if there was no light or color, she would not have given me eyes to see; if there was no such thing as truth in the world, why should she have given me a mind to know the truth; and if there was no everlasting life for my soul, why should she give my soul a natural longing for it? Yes; unless my soul is immortal, Nature is a liar. Nay, in that case, even

Nature's God Himself would be false, for God has promised to render to every man according to his works; to reward the virtuous and to punish the wicked. But what do I see? I look around me and I see a world of saints and sinners—the saints living in poverty and wretchedness all their lives, the sinners affluent and happy. Oh, surely virtue does not always get its reward nor vice its punishment in this world; and so God's words would be false and His justice a mere mockery, were there no hereafter of happiness for the good and of misery for the wicked. If my soul is to die with my body, religion is a humbug, laws do not bind; I can plunder and outrage and kill and give free play to all the worst inclinations of my nature; for if there is no hereafter why not enjoy this life to the full? Why fear man? Why fear God? Believers have ever held the doctrine of a hereafter, and unbelievers, while denying it with the lips, have confessed it in their lives and in their inmost souls. Even the poor untutored savage laid him down to die with a prayer on his lips, and a firm hope in his heart of waking in the happy hunting-grounds. Yes, my soul, I feel that I possess thee, and that thou canst never die; that thou art not made of perishable matter, like my body, but art a pure spirit; that of thine own nature thou art immortal, and that God will never annihilate thee; that, as He has promised, He will render to thee in the last day according to thy deeds; reward thee, if good, with eternal happiness, and condemn thee, if wicked, to the everlasting pains of hell.

If, therefore, I have a soul, and that soul is immortal, what, I next ask myself, what is the value of this soul of mine? For an answer, let me in spirit raise myself above my earthly surroundings; let me, as it were, climb up in spirit half-way to heaven, and there meet my God and there say to Him: "Lord, teach me the value of my own soul!" What does He answer? "Lay not up to thyself perishable treasures on earth, but lay up to thyself everlasting treasures in heaven. For what will it profit thee if thou gainest the whole world and suffer the loss of thine own soul, or what exchange shalt thou give for thy soul?" True, Lord, the world would profit me nothing without my soul. It would not be a fair exchange. My soul longs for God and will not rest satisfied with anything short of God Himself. Here, then, standing before the Most High, I recognize that there are in the whole world of things, just two, and only two things, of prime importance to me, viz., God and my own soul. All other things over and above these two are mere trifles. Remember that passage of the Gospel where we are told the devil tempted Our Lord; where he took Our Lord into a high place and showed Him all the riches and pleasures and honors of the world, and said to Him: "All this will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me." But Our Lord answered him: "Begone, Satan." I, too, were the devil to come to me at this moment and offer me the whole world in exchange for my soul, would imitate my Lord and answer: "Begone, Satan, for what

doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" For what are material and temporal goods in comparison with the spiritual and eternal? "I have seen all things that are under the sun," says the Wise Man, "but vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Hence he immediately adds: "One thing, therefore, and one thing only have I asked of the Lord that I [i.e., his soul] may dwell in the house of the Lord [i.e., heaven] all the days of my life." What then is the one great work I have to do here on earth? To bring God to my soul by sanctifying it, and to bring my soul to God by saving it. If I am born into this world, and live and die and save not my soul, all is lost. It matters not if I have been the greatest man that ever lived; if worldly fame has written success in letters of gold on my tombstone; oh, it availeth nothing if I have not saved my soul, for the recording angel will erase my name from the Book of Life with her tears and will write "failure" in its stead. But, on the other hand, if I save my soul all is gained. What matters it if I am poor and miserable here if I am to be happy forever hereafter? Time is but a moment compared to eternity. And, oh, remember and remember, and again I say, remember, that I have only one soul which can be lost only once, but, once lost, it is lost forever. I will, therefore, first seek the kingdom of God and His justice, and all other things I will take as they come, saying, with the indifference of holy Job: "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away. Blest be the

name of the Lord." Riches—pshaw!—had I all the riches of the world I would still long for something more. The rust, the moth, and the burglar would make me uneasy, and fickle fortune would keep me in constant dread of poverty. No, I will seek heavenly treasures where the rust and the moth do not consume, nor the thief break through and steal. I will not imitate Martha, who was solicitous about her household affairs when Our Lord visited her, but I will follow her sister Mary and sit at the feet of my Lord and hear from His lips these consoling words: "Child, thou hast chosen the better part." Riches I would have to leave behind, and how could they help my soul in the next world when they cannot even preserve my body from decay in this world? Alas! it will profit me little to have much wealth stored up for many years, for no sooner shall I have begun to eat, drink, and be merry, than my Lord shall say to me: "Thou fool, this very night shall I demand thy soul of thee." No, riches that are not used for that one all-important thing—my soul's salvation—are worse than useless. But honors! Should I sell my soul for them? Honors! What do they contribute to the shaping of my eternal destiny? Each new title is a chain binding me closer to earth, widening the gulf between me and my God. What doth it profit me to stand up and receive the smiles and applause of an admiring world, if I am an enemy of God? if the angels are weeping over my sins? if the devil with fiendish glee is preparing a place in hell for my immortal soul? St. Francis Zazara when

a boy at school was filled with a longing for worldly honors. One day he met St. Philip Neri and the venerable old man asked him: "Francis, what do you intend to be?" "I will be the genius of the school and bear off all the honors." "And then?" "I will be a priest." "And then?" "I will be a bishop." "And then?" "I will be a cardinal." "And then?" "Pope." "And then?" "I shall die, I suppose." "And then?" Ah, what then, what then? On the answer to that last then depends an eternity of happiness or an eternity of misery. But worldly pleasures—could I exchange my soul for a life of pleasure? Oh, no, for the highest carnal pleasure is as pain compared to the joys of heaven. God tells me that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what joys He has prepared for those who love Him." And shall I forfeit all that for a low, sensual gratification which I indulge in one moment only to repent of it the next? Time is but a moment compared to eternity, and so I am the most foolish of fools if for a momentary gratification I sacrifice an eternity of joy and incur an eternity of misery. Think of Lazarus and Dives. Dives was a rich man who feasted sumptuously every day and gave not a thought to God or the value of his own soul, and Lazarus was a beggar dying of starvation on the rich man's doorstep, with never a friend in all the world but an old dog that licked his sores. They both died—Lazarus on the doorstep and Dives at his table. What was the lot of each? Lazarus, the Gos-

pel tells us, was taken up into Abraham's bosom, but Dives was buried in hell. Then the rich man's soul cried from hell: "Father Abraham, send Lazarus to give me one drop of water to quench my burning thirst." But God answered him: "No, for between you and him there lies an infinite abyss separating you forever." O Dives, lost soul, you who enjoyed all the favors the world could give, do they profit thee nothing now? Nothing. All thy riches, honors, and pleasures, do they profit thee nothing now? Nothing. O Lazarus, blest soul, whence comes thy present happiness? Because I held the world at its true value—because I knew that the one thing I had to gain in heaven was my God, and the most precious thing I had on earth was my own soul.

But let me turn my eyes from earthly things to my own soul and ask, what is its value? Were my father a great man in the eyes of the world I would participate in his greatness, for he gave me being and I bear his likeness. Now, God is a being of infinite greatness and you, my soul, are His son, made to His image and likeness. You are, therefore, in a way, infinitely precious. Each person of the Trinity has vied with the other in showering on my soul His choicest gifts. The Father gave it an independent existence; the Son, an intellect to know the loftiest truth; and the Holy Ghost, a will to love and desire an infinite good. David, speaking of the soul's creation, cries out: "A little less, O Lord, a little less than the angels hast Thou made her." The soul, like the angels, is a pure spirit, and one particle of a

spiritual substance is more precious in the sight of God than the whole material universe. So beautiful indeed is she that God has said He loves to come and dwell in the souls of men. And my soul feels the dignity of her nature. She spurns this world and its honors as unworthy of her, and turns to God as the one and only being worthy of her love. She knows her high destiny; that she has been created to know and enjoy God forever. So whether she will or no, she is forced to exclaim with the Psalmist: "As the famished and hunted stag thirsts after the fountains of water, so do I thirst and pant after Thee, my God." Again, let me go down into hell and ask Satan what is the value of my soul. "Value!" he cries, "I would give ten thousand worlds for one human soul. Night and day, and day and night, I roam the world seeking souls. All the schemes and artifices which the malice of an angelic intelligence can devise I employ to entrap these precious souls. Value! Why, your soul is so precious that in the hope of gaining it I would and do defy and contend with the power of almighty God Himself." Finally, let me turn to God and ask what is the value of my soul? Ah! if God had never created but one human soul, my own for instance, He would still have done as much to gain it to Himself as He has done to gain all mankind. He would have created the earth and heavens; the sun, moon, and stars, and all the glory thereof, for my individual use. He would have held out to me all those favors and graces He now pours out to all. He would have come down from heaven

and become man and raised the human soul to such a union with God as no angel can ever enjoy. He would have suffered and poured out the last drop of His precious blood for my soul alone. He would have forgiven me sins for less than which He damned whole legions of angels, and He would have instituted for my sake alone that banquet to which not even the angels are admitted—the Blessed Eucharist. There, oh, my soul, is the price God has paid for you! There is your value in His sight! Far above all earthly things by virtue of your nature; infinitely precious in the ransom paid for you; higher than the highest angel in your glorious destiny.

Brethren, that is the value of my soul. Does it appear from the life I lead that I appreciate its value? Alas and alack! I fear the vast majority of us will have to answer No. When we look at the saints of God who succeeded in thoroughly realizing that great truth that for each of us the only two things worth attending to are God and his own soul—when we consider the lives they lived to bring their souls to God, do we feel we are following their example? What will become of me, a sinner, since even the saints tremble for their destiny? It is not enough to serve my body all my life, and in the few last moments of my existence turn my thoughts to God and my own soul. No, I must begin now. I must begin here to-day. If I am a young single man or woman I must remember that all the pleasures of the world will profit me nothing if I lose my soul. The young married couple must remember that honors and so-

cial distinctions are worthless, if they lose their souls. The old people must remind themselves that all their riches will desert them at their death, and will avail them not, if, awaking in eternity, they find they have lost their souls. What shall I say of the man who is so taken up with worldly affairs that he has no time for spiritual matters—who never utters a prayer nor goes to Mass, nor reconciles himself to God in the sacraments of confession and communion? Alas! he has forgotten the value of his soul—yea, he has actually forgotten he has a soul at all. What shall I say of the drunkard? He remembers he has a soul and he knows its value, but he puts it out of the way—he poisons it with alcohol—drowns it in the wine goblet, and buries it in the vile grave of his own filthy body. What shall I say of the impure? Ah! he is the worst of all, for he has forgotten not only that he has an immortal soul, but even that he has a human body—he has become a brute beast. His soul, that celestial spirit within him, faints at the abomination it beholds—an angel imprisoned in a hog-pen—an angel and a devil going through life bound neck and neck. Oh, Brethren, do not leave this church to-day till you have pondered well these two words—God and my own soul. Bear them in your minds and hearts—keep them ever before your eyes, and let them be the watchwords of your lives—God and my own soul—God and my own soul—for what will it profit me if I gain the whole world and suffer the loss of my God and my own soul? God and my own soul! God and my own soul!

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

THE NECESSITY OF RELIGION.

"*Young man, I say to thee, arise.*"—Luke vii. 14.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Widow and son. II. Miracle. III. History's repetitions.

I. Causes and objections: 1. Religion and irreligion. 2. Ignorant pride, human respect, vice. 3. Old, change, civilization.

II. Indispensable: 1. All peoples. 2. State of infidel. 3. Crime against God.

III. Results of irreligion: 1. Picking and choosing. 2. Man minus religion. 3. Death-bed.

Per.: Pray that miracle may be repeated.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, the Gospel of this morning's Mass presents to my mind a picture and a subject for discourse. A picture—that of Christ meeting the funeral of the son of the widow of Naim; a subject for discourse—the necessity of religion. As Our Lord was entering the town, behold a dead man was carried out—the only son of his mother and she was a widow. And seeing the poor mourner the tender heart of Christ melted with pity and He said to her: "Daughter, weep not." And touching her son He said: "Young man, I say to thee, arise," and the dead sat up and began to speak, and He gave him to his mother, and the astonished multitude cried out: "A great prophet is risen up among us and God hath visited His people."

Alas! brethren, how history repeats itself. Here to-day in many of you I see that picture reproduced;

many a mother, wife, daughter, or sister, your hearts full of desolation; bending, like the widow, in speechless sorrow over the spiritual corpse of son or husband, father or brother—dead to God by their neglect of the sacred duties of religion. And you come here, as to the Christ, seeking to again move Him to pity; begging Him to repeat to you the consoling words: "Daughter, weep not," or to your unfortunate relative: "Young man, I say to thee, arise." May Christ comfort your afflicted hearts as He did that of the widow of Naim!

Brethren, by religion I mean the sum of the relationship between man and God—God creating preserving, sanctifying, and saving man; and man's consequent duties of knowing, loving, and serving God in this life, with the hope of eternal happiness in the next. No one, except possibly the fool, will dare say in his heart, there is no God. On the other hand, the soul's consciousness of her own intellectual nature and inherent longing for everlasting happiness, loudly proclaim her to be spiritual and immortal. Now between those two beings, God and man, the connecting link—the bond of union—is religion. Whether we will or no, whether we recognize it or not, such a bond surely exists. For, though man at his creation becomes a distinct individual, still, not even God Himself could make a single creature independent of his Creator. But alas! what God refuses to do—what God is unable to do—man, foolish and ungrateful, is not slow to attempt. For the man without religion—the man

who forsakes or neglects his religion—practically says: "Away with God! I will none of Him! I am independent even of Him—absolutely self-sufficient." The foundling renounces his generous benefactor; the son disowns the most loving of fathers! In some this rebellious spirit takes the form of contempt for everything sacred; in others, it is the bitter opposition to some particular creed; in the majority, it is downright indifference. And though the cases of the scoffer and the religious fanatic are, God knows, deplorable enough, still, there is in them an activity, an interest—a partial belief, if you will—which may, God willing, lead to something better. But the case of the indifferent is the most hopeless of all. He is neither hot nor cold, and, therefore, disgusting to God. "I would," says the Holy Spirit, speaking to the indifferent, "I would thou wert cold or hot; but because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth."

Brethren, the causes of irreligion are, it seems to me, threefold. First of all is "ignorant pride;" sometimes a little pride and great ignorance; sometimes less ignorance and greater pride; but invariably "ignorant pride." How many men there are, not knowing even how to read or write, who will sneer at those eternal truths of religion, in the presence of which the world's greatest minds have bowed in humble assent! How many men there are with a stock of learning, little enough to be dangerous, but large enough to fill them with infinite con-

ceit, who will produce, as their own, objections to religion as old as history; as unanswerable, objections refuted thousands of times; feeble, knock-kneed arguments, as destructive of that religion the saints professed and hosts of Christian martyrs defended with their lives! How many men there are, who, in the pride of their hearts—because, forsooth, they have delved deeply in science, literature, or art—who have learned everything except to recognize how little they know, do not hesitate to pass judgment on religion, as did Pontius Pilate on Our Saviour; and treat her as he treated Christ—as a fool or an impostor! Ignorant pride and human respect. Here is the second cause of irreligion. Pride and ignorance are mental defects, but human respect is a disease of the will, a lack of moral backbone; the misfortune of those who "are ashamed to profess the faith of Christ crucified." But it is not always the head that is at fault; more often it is the heart, and here we have the third and last cause of irreligion—human passion. There is no virtue religion does not inculcate, no vice she does not denounce; and sooner shall heaven and earth pass away than she forego one iota of her law for any man. Hence the sinner, unwilling to give up his darling devil, is, by consistency, forced body and soul into the ranks of unbelievers, according to Christ's own words: "No man can serve two masters," and "He that is not with Me is against Me."

Brethren, I would not tire you by rehearsing the arguments with which the irreligious seek to justify

themselves, were it not that these arguments, by their very weakness, prove the necessity of religion. In a series of religious chats with a young gentleman, lately, I found his first great difficulty was that religion was an old story, something belonging to a bygone age. Old! most assuredly it is old! As old as the human race, for it is the relation of man to God. I trace it back through the Christian era; back to Calvary and the cross of Christ; back to Moses and Aaron; back to the caves of the prophets and the tents of the patriarchs; back to the cradle of humanity, and thence back to heaven, whence it comes. Is age her shame, or is it not rather like an old lady's gray hairs, her crown of glory? A crisp bank-note or a brilliant coin is suspected as counterfeit by reason of its very newness. So, too, the various non-Catholic sects are discredited by their own modernity; whereas one instinctively turns for the genuine article to that religion, and that alone, which with its God can say of itself: "Before Abraham was, I am;" of which the Psalmist says: "Thou art ever the selfsame and thy years shall not fail." "Oh, but," my friend replies, "religion has changed and does change!" Change, yes, as Christ changed from a babe to a youth and full-grown man. True, she was, in times of persecution, often changed, as was Christ by His Passion from the most beautiful of the sons of men to a mangled felon on the cross with no beauty in Him. Change! yes, as the tree changes its girth and the spread of its branches; changes in her ceremonies as the tree

changes its foliage; changes in her results, as the tree, from year to year, changes its fruits. Ever changing and yet ever the same. For religion is not an Egyptian mummy, but a living, active agent that becomes all things to all men to save all. Yet in her essential parts she is as unchangeable, in an ever-changing world, as that pyramid of the desert which for ages has watched the ever-changing Nile glide slowly at its feet. But would not civilization suffice, without religion to block her way? Civilization suffice! Alas! how small the connection between education and virtue is well attested in this most enlightened but most vicious age. Religion block the way of civilization! Why, when science, art, and literature, in the Middle Ages, were cast out like helpless babes doomed to destruction, religion took them to her breast, nursed them in the cloister, and restored them to the world, as Pharao's daughter restored Moses to be the leader—the saviour of the nation. Religion is the life-giving sun in the world of souls; the moon lighting up the darkness of human existence; and that same religion that began with humanity shall end only with humanity, for God is with it all time and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Brethren, religion is an essential element of our inner nature. As the stag after the fountain of living water, so our minds thirst after truth—and God is truth. The human will, feeling its own weakness, looks up for some infallible rule of action—and God is the way. Both body and soul feel they are created

things and turn instinctively to pay homage to the Author of their being—and God is life. Now this turning of our whole being to God, as the sunflower to the sun—to God, the way, the truth, and the life—this is religion. And that it is a fundamental law of our nature is attested by the fact that in all the nations of the world, past or present, you will not find one without its religion. Here and there a blasphemous monster will assert his unbelief, but his voice is drowned in the chorus of adoration that ascends from the world to the throne of God. True, the system of truths of this savage people may be preposterous; the moral code of that other, barbarous; this nation may worship the sun or moon or some graven thing; the object of that other's worship may be a myth; but still it is ever the same craving of the soul for the way, the truth, and the life—for God. Hence, I say, the man of no religion—the man who forsakes or neglects his religion—is a living lie. His whole life is a contradiction —a perversion of Nature. In his words and actions he asserts, probably boasts of, his unbelief, but his heart, his soul cries out: "Thou liest; deep down in thy being is the consciousness of God's existence and thy soul's immortality, and the essential relations of each to the other." Further still, he is a moral suicide. He stifles into silence the most sacred aspirations of his soul, and refuses her the truth and love as necessary to her existence as food and drink to the body. He is worse than the idolater or the fetish worshipper. Nay, I would venture a step

further and assert that he descends to the level of the brute. For what is it distinguishes man from the brute? The ability to think? No, for an elephant is wiser than many men. The gift of speech? No; monkeys converse fluently. Their bodily shape? No; there are gorillas and men who would pass for brothers. The distinguishing mark is the yearning of man's soul for a higher life. Man's dignity as lord of creation and heir to heaven is never more emphatically asserted than when he says: "I believe in God," "Thy will be done," and falling down prays: "Our Father, who art in heaven." But the unbeliever, the neglecter of religion, has practically nothing to distinguish him from the brute creation. Like the prodigal son, he no sooner abandons his father than he begins to associate and feed with the swine, and regains his manhood—his dignity as son and heir—only when he forms and carries out his resolution to arise and go to his father. This folly of the irreligious not only reflects on themselves, but it is a crime of injustice against God. What a monster of injustice is the son who turns his back on his parents in the hour of their need! What an execrable ingrate he is who steals away and hides when the call goes forth for defenders of his country! For our parents give us being and make us what we are, and our country watches over and protects us at home and abroad. But God is nearer to us than parents or country. Whatever we are, whatever we have, comes primarily from Him, and every moment of our lives we feel the need of His sustaining and protect-

ing hand. Therefore, I say, the unbeliever—the neglecter of religion—is infinitely baser than the betrayer of his country.

Brethren, your irreligious relative will tell you this picture is overdrawn. "I am not as bad as that," he says, "I admit all but a few of the truths of religion. With one or two exceptions the commandments of God and the Church are all right. But have not I the right to worship God in my own way?" The right to pick and choose in religion—to worship God as you please! Most decidedly not! What manner of citizen, soldier, or servant would that be who should decide with himself what laws and commands he would obey, which violate? God did not consult you and me whether He should create and redeem us or not; and the duties and obligations arising from creation and redemption are not for us to criticise but to fulfil. The religion that accepts only half the truth and does only what it feels like doing, is like worshipping God and robbing our neighbor; or helping our neighbor and despising God. It is as bad, aye worse than no religion, because in the sight of God it adds insult to injury. For God has sworn that sooner shall the heavens fall than one iota of His religion be changed, and St. Paul warns us that even were an angel from heaven to preach us a gospel other than that of Christ crucified let him be anathema.

Brethren, let me prove to you the picture is not overdrawn, by taking it from life. This irreligious relative of yours, what is his condition? His soul ani-

mates his body, it is true, but in all its other functions it is practically dead. He lives a purely natural, animal life, with all the wretchedness of the animal, and none of its contentment. Speaking of such a life holy Job says: "Man, born of woman, liveth a short time, and is filled with many miseries." For miseries come to man from the world through his body; but consolations come through his soul from religion. But in the case of your friend it is all misery and no consolation. He looks on himself as a purely material being who is born, lives and dies, and there is an end of it. By his own admission he is a mere lump of red clay, as his name originally signifies; like the old Pagan philosophers, his favorite flower is the swamp lily, to show that he, too, has sprung from the slime of the earth. Sprung from nothing by a process of conception too shameful to be thought of or talked about; an ordeal which Christ, with all His humility, was unwilling to undergo. A helpless prisoner before his birth in a filthy cell; guilty at his birth of almost a murderous attack on the mother that bore him; for years after his birth a little bundle of miseries to himself and his family. Ask the young mother what are the miseries of man's earlier years. To learn the ills all flesh is heir to, visit the parlors of a dentist, the operating-room of a hospital; count the doctors' signs in our city, the thousands of diseases and thousands of remedies, often worse than the diseases themselves. The poor envy the affluence of the rich; and the rich, the happiness of the poor; every one thinks his own station in

life the least desirable of all. Such things happen to all flesh, but to sinners sevenfold more. For though the irreligious may ignore his soul, yet will she not be ignored. If she cannot have the truth and the love she craves, she will turn and fill herself with the husks of sin. If he will not praise God in prayer, be sure he will not fail to blaspheme. If he will not sanctify the Sabbath day by going to church, you may look for him in the policy shop or den of iniquity. If he will not drink the chalice of His blood that Christ offers him, he will drain the glass of hell-fire the devil ministers. Ah! who shall tell the consequent miseries to himself and family! As well try to count the drops of rain or the sighs of the wind, as enumerate the tears of his poor children or the moans of his heart-broken mother, wife, or sister. Life, God knows, is at best wretched enough, but life without religion would be unbearable. It would be this earth without the sun; a wild night with no moon; a trackless expanse of stormy ocean with no hope of land or friends beyond. Were the uncreated offered life without religion, they would shrink in horror from existence; for their greatest happiness would be that of never having been. But with religion as our guide we are consoled through it all. We see the thorns of life spiritualized in Our Saviour's crown; and hope carries us on to that happy land where our places shall be allotted, not by the favors of fortune or the accident of birth, but where each has the making of his own future; all happy, the afflicted comforted and the weary at rest.

Brethren, there is one other place where you may study the necessity of religion—by a man's death-bed. Death dispels illusions and brings us back to the realities of life. Many a life-long argument as to the uselessness of religion has been disproved at the hour of death. Even that arch-atheist, Voltaire, acknowledged his error at the last, and would have called in the ministers of religion were they not forcibly kept away from him by the members of the society he himself had founded—the "Society for the Protection of Man from His God." That of so many unbelievers so few die in their unbelief is the strongest argument for the necessity of religion. And of those who carry their unbelief beyond the grave, witness the horrible death of one such, and tell me if that is not even a stronger argument. I have seen one such that I am not likely soon to forget—such that even now I turn in horror from the remembrance. But assist at the death of a faithful child of God—a young Catholic boy or girl—on their face that look of peace and love one sees on the face of a nun—the quick flash of the closing eyes as they get their first glimpse of their glorified Saviour—and the tremble of the lips as they settle into a smile that reflects the peace of heaven. Truly, blessed in the sight of God and man is the death of God's saints.

Brethren, let the services to-day be a repetition of the scene at Naim. Pray to Our Lord for the conversion of sinners. To Our Lord, the Comforter of souls, that He may console the sad heart of many a mourning woman. To Our Lord, the Converter of

souls, that He may raise up our men from their neglect or unbelief. Pray, and I guarantee we shall again have reason to cry out: "A great prophet is risen up amongst us, and God hath visited His people."

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

Religion and Religionism.

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—Luke xiv. 11.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. The spirit and the letter. II. Origin of liturgy. III. Human tendency.
I. Phariseeism: 1. Religious controversies. 2. God's remonstrance. 3. Pharisees' practice.
II. Third command: 1. Pharisaic precepts. 2. Gloom of sinners. 3. Joy of saints.
III. Gospel incident: 1. Christ and His enemies. 2. In spirit and truth. 3. The first places.
Per.: 1. Rational Sabbath. 2. No monopoly in heaven. 3. Substance and accident.

SERMON.

Brethren, in the spiritual history of mankind two phases of religion continually present themselves: the spirit and the letter, interior sanctification and empty externalism, in a word, religion and religionism. No student of Scripture can doubt for a moment that the outward forms of religion have their place and their usefulness in the economy of salvation, for from the earliest times they have been established and insisted upon by God Himself. That God prescribed a ritual at all, was due, no doubt, to the exigencies of the occasion, for man's material and

social nature would never have been content with worshipping the Deity in spirit alone, but would have irresistibly impelled him to the building up of a code of ceremonies as unworthy of their high purpose as were the rites of Paganism. This craving for ritualism is evidenced even to-day, no less in the powerful influence of our grand Catholic functions over the minds and hearts of the faithful, than in the elaborate rituals of secret and semi-religious societies; and the absence of such was one of the many weak points in primitive Protestantism. But the world's tendency has ever been to convert the means into an end, to be content with the outward form to the neglect of interior sanctification, to divorce religion and morality, to so exaggerate the importance of creeds and rites and ceremonies as to lose sight in whole or in part of God's commandments. But religion, clean and unspotted before God and the Father is, first of all, to keep oneself undefiled from this world. Neither the click-clack of the Buddhist's prayer-wheel, nor the Pharisee's scrupulous loyalty to ancient traditions, nor the Catholic's devotedness to his daily prayers and his Sunday Mass will avail one particle unless the inner man be right with God; unless the end and object of all religion, personal sanctification, be looked to, and the means necessary for its attainment employed.

Brethren, religionism has wrought more mischief than religion can ever undo. Holy wars have again and again rent the world in twain, and Church controversies have at times dismembered Christ's mys-

tical body, and what were they all about? Matters of opinion, for the most part, and modes of worship. The means were ever the point at issue, but on the ends in view, sanctification and salvation, the disputes had no other bearing than to unwittingly defeat them. Alas! how many times has the history recorded in the twelfth chapter of Judges repeated itself! How many times has a point in religion as unimportant as the difference between Schibboleth and Sibboleth brought down social ostracism and anathema on individuals and nations, or proved for them, mayhap, a matter of life and death? Take, for example, the incident of to-day's Gospel. The Pharisees, you know, were great sticklers for the law; to expound and enforce it was the chief business of their lives. The ten brief commands, or "words" handed down by God to Moses, had in the course of time been so divided, subdivided, and multiplied, and cunning casuistry had surrounded them with such a tangle of cases and exceptions and human traditions, that the service of God had become a veritable burden. Again and again God had signified His disapproval. "Bring no more vain oblations," He said by Isaias, "incense is an abomination unto Me, and your feasts My soul abhorreth." "Hath the Lord," says Samuel, "as great delight in sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, obedience is better than sacrifices, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "Will the Lord" asks Micheas, "be pleased with thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of oil, and human sacrifice? No, He hath showed thee, O man,

what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" But, notwithstanding all this, the Pharisees had gone on multiplying laws, and surrounding every trivial circumstance of life with absurd rules and regulations. They were greatly concerned about phylacteries and fringes, and long prayers, and tithing of mint and anise and cumin, and hand-washing, etc., but the weightier things of the law, such as judgment and mercy and faith, they neglected. They strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel; they made clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but not the inside; for within they were full of rapine and iniquity. Such were the proud, conceited hypocrites against whom Our Lord pronounced a woe and a heavy judgment, for that they neither entered heaven themselves nor allowed others to do so, nor moved with a finger of their own the insupportable burdens with which they loaded others.

But it was on the question of Sabbath observance that the Pharisees outdid themselves. In their hands that simple precept: "Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day" grew and dilated into twenty-four long and inconceivably intricate chapters of the Talmud. No journey over 2,000 cubits in length should be undertaken, no meal prepared, no candle or fire lighted, no forbidden food greater than the size of an olive partaken of, no labor done heavier than the lifting of a fig. Then follows such a mass of cases, suppositions, difficulties, and evasions that one wonders how

sane men could have been led to the invention or discussion of such trivialities. The Puritanic Sabbath was child's play compared with the rigor of that of the Pharisees. Like the Puritans they believed that God was to be served in a spirit of sadness and gloom, and how great was their error may be learned from Christ and His followers. "Rejoice and be glad," He says, "for your reward is exceeding great," and, "Be not like the hypocrites, sad." "Rejoice," says St. Paul, "and again I say rejoice; let your moderation be known to all men: the Lord is nigh." Sadness is rather the lot of sinners, of whom St. James says: "Be afflicted, and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into sorrow. Go to, now, ye rich men; weep and howl in your miseries." Every true servant of God, from that band of Apostles which returned from the Ascension to Jerusalem rejoicing, down to the saints of to-day, has been characterized by a cheerful, joyous disposition. And rightly so, for our body's capacity for enjoyment is to that of our soul as is a shallow cup to a mighty reservoir, and as a source of happiness God is to the world as is a limitless ocean to a little pool. The saints rejoice "always," for worldly joy is fitful, and the only joy that is stable is "joy in the Lord." Theirs is a double joy, for they rejoice in the Lord, and again in His works; in God their Creator, and again in God their Redeemer; in prosperity, and again in adversity. Theirs is an evenly-balanced joy, without excess, without irreverence, their moderation patent to all men, for their

Lord, who is nigh and ever before their eyes and their minds, is both the source and the moderator of their gladness. Whatever is innocent in the way of enjoyment, whatever is necessary in the way of labor, whatever is good and useful in the way of benevolence can never be unlawful, be the day ever so holy, and any legislation or petty ordinances or cavilings to the contrary are Puritanic, Pharisaical, hypocritical.

Jesus, then, is dining with a distinguished company of Pharisees, on the Sabbath day, and they are watching Him. There is a marked contrast between the Guest's loving condescension and the malice of His entertainers. He, correct in outward form and interiorly righteous, presents a striking figure of religion pure and unspotted, but they illustrate religionism, for their hospitality, though effusive or perhaps excessive, is none the less hollow and insincere. They hate Him, in fact, and have purposely seated opposite to Him a man sick of the palsy, that, should Christ heal him, they may have in this breach of the Sabbath some ground for accusation. Here is an opportunity to emphasize a great truth, and Our Lord seizes it eagerly. With one hand He brushes aside the accumulated traditions and prejudices and absurdities which for ages have passed for godliness, and with the other He lays bare the very heart and essence of all religion by curing the palsied man. His action is in line with His entire teaching and practice. "I will have mercy," He says, "and not sacrifice." "Not every man that saith to Me: Lord,

Lord, shall be saved, but he that doeth the will of My Father." Rancor and hatred raged between the Jews and the Samaritans as to whether God was to be worshipped on Garizim or in Jerusalem, and Christ exposed their folly by saying simply: "God is to be adored in spirit and in truth." With the Pharisees various articles of diet were unclean and forbidden, but Christ abolished their ordinances and made all meats clean, saying: "The things from without cannot defile a man, but from within, out of the heart, proceed all defilements." When asked to teach His disciples to pray, how simple and brief was the prayer He taught! When the demand was made: "Lord, what must I do to possess eternal life?" did He designate certain opinions and rites and ceremonies as essential to that end? No. His answer was: "Keep the commandments." What commandments? Those two on which depend the whole law and the prophets: "Love God above all things and your neighbor as yourself." The keeping of these produces within us that new creature, in comparison with which, says St. Paul, circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. For if we have prophecy and know all mysteries, and have faith so as to move mountains, and speak with the tongue of angels, and fast and pray, and give our substance to the poor and our bodies to be burned, and if withal we have not interior righteousness, it will profit us nothing, for we are before God as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. This is the lesson Christ's action in to-day's Gospel has for the Phari-

sees of all time. God made the Sabbath for man and not man for the Sabbath, and it is a wicked perversion of truth which will make the observance of the Lord's day conflict with one's urgent duty to God, his neighbor, or himself. Even the fanatical Pharisees yielded when it was a question of self-interest, for they had decreed that, should a valuable animal have fallen into a pit on the Sabbath, he might without breach of the law be extricated. And ought not this child of God, this palsied one, be healed of his disease on the Sabbath day? Christ, therefore, healed him, and with infinite delicacy bade him go in peace, lest the cavilings of the Pharisees should mar his joy in his newly found health. Then turning to the others, He proceeded to expose their selfish pride and vanity, and their hypocritical pretensions to sanctity. The social standing of the dropsical man was doubtless vastly inferior to that of the others, nor would he have been there at all had not his condition served their purpose. Christ, too, though invited, was despised by them and hated. It is probable, therefore, that the Saviour and the sick man were assigned positions face to face at the very foot of the table, while the others with mock humility or shameless effrontery manœuvred for the first places. And when the host proceeded to rearrange his guests, and those highest up were forced to give place, blushing and confused, to others more honorable than they, what myriads of human lives, religious histories, divine judgments, the scene must have brought to the Saviour's mind! What millions of

self-opinionated Pharisees He must have seen throughout all time, zealous for the letter but knowing nothing of the spirit of the law, exaggerating the accidentals of religion and minimizing or altogether neglecting its essentials, anathematizing all who dare to differ with them, and setting apart for themselves as if by divine right the very first place in the kingdom of heaven. But presently His eyes meet those of the one honest man there, the paralytic, and He sees in them a new meaning, a dawning understanding of it all, a kindling faith and hope and love, and then and there Christ heals him. "The first shall be last, and the last, first." Christ is the real host there, and the banquet is of His bounty: His end of the table is really the head, and His it is to place the guests. The last, the righteous, are now first, and the first, the religionists and hypocrites, are now last, and verily so shall it be in God's heavenly kingdom.

Brethren, there are two points I would wish to especially impress upon you to-day: first, that a cheerful disposition and innocent amusement are not inconsistent with true religion; and secondly, that we must be careful not to set up a monopoly in paradise and its mercies. It was to virtuous Pagans that St. Peter said: "Verily I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every station he that feareth Him and doeth righteousness is accepted of Him." Let us not be too hard on people who refuse to adopt our opinions, rites, and ceremonies. After all, the liturgy of primitive Christianity was a very simple affair, and we would doubtless find it hard to

recognize it in our own. External and accidental differences are no sure ground on which to base a judgment as to who are God's own children and who are not, nor are they the points on which God will judge us. Even St. Paul confesses that no man knows whether he be praiseworthy or blameworthy in the sight of God, and whatever vague ideas we may acquire on the subject must be determined by the rule Christ laid down: "By their fruits—not by their opinions or outward observances—but by their fruits ye shall know them." This was precisely where the Pharisees erred. Christ refused to conform to their usages as to Sabbath observance and hand-washing, and though they saw Him going around doing good, they yet deemed Him a devil incarnate; and though they beheld Him miraculously feeding the multitudes, they saw therein only a violation of their ordinances. Let us live and let live, and think betimes of the beam in our own eye, and imitate more the good God who makes His sun to shine on the good and bad alike. But of all things let us beware of contenting ourselves with the accessories of religion and neglecting its substance. No such easy compromise between God and the world is possible. God will not be deceived as was Isaac: His eye will penetrate the disguise and detect Jacob, though the hands and the face be those of Esau. No matter how strict our outward observance may have been, no matter if we have even done miracles and prophesied in Christ's name, if we neglect our interior sanctification He will declare at the last that

amen, He never knew us. Let us beware lest the first become last and the last first. Let us remember that he that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost.

The Law of Love.

"*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind . . . and thy neighbor as thyself.*"—Matt. xxii. 37–39.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Gregory's commentary. II. Paul's ideal. III. Christ's practice and result.
I. Charity and prudence: 1. A and Z. 2. Pharisees and Sadducees. 3. Questions useful, idle, malicious.
II. Love manifested: 1. By Christ. 2. By Holy Ghost. 3. To all.
III. Object: 1. To wean from world. 2. To turn to God. 3. To live soberly, justly, godly.
Per.: 1. Love of God first. 2. Youth and age. 3. Sinai, Bethlehem, valley of Josaphat.

SERMON.

Brethren, in reading to-day's Gospel we realize the truth of Pope St. Gregory's commentary. "Our Lord and Saviour," he says, "admonishes us sometimes in words and sometimes by His deeds, for His very actions are precepts, because, though performed in silence, they explain to us our duties." The Gospel theme is the great commandment of love, on which dependeth the whole law and the prophets. The Saviour's present bearing towards His enemies and the whole tenor of His earthly life illustrate what His words proclaim—the law of love. His dealing

with men was the prototype of St. Paul's ideal set forth in to-day's epistle. Christ walked among them, worthy of the vocation in which He was called, with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting them in charity, careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The multiple meaning of the Saviour's words, the deep significance of His every act, and the marvellous and hitherto unknown harmony between His teaching and His practice—these it was which caused His hearers to say of Him: "Verily, never did man speak as this man speaks."

Brethren, charity is queen among virtues. It is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of all godliness, even as is God Himself, "for," says St. John, "God is love." It is the first and the greatest commandment of the law; it is the underlying substance, the soul, the life of every other virtue in the calendar, the litany of holiness. Again it is the last, it is eternal, "for," says St. Paul, "when even faith shall have merged into the beatific vision and hope into possession, then only will charity become in very truth the bond of perfection, to endure forever and ever." Among mortals, however, charity, though ever a lovely queen, is blind unless her handmaid prudence light her way. Now these two virtues, charity and prudence, had practically abandoned earth when Jesus came, and in the main the object of His coming was their restoration. How utterly devoid of charity were the Sadducees and the Pharisees! These two sects were bitterly opposed, the

former denying, the latter asserting, the resurrection of the dead. But enemies though they were, they in opposing Christ as easily forgot their differences as do our modern heretics in opposition to Christ's true Church. The Sadducees, defeated, desist from questioning Him; the Pharisees advance to the attack. Christ's method of dealing with His questioners is a model for our imitation. In our intercourse with men we are likely to encounter three kinds of religious disputants. Questions prompted by idle curiosity are better left unanswered. Thus, when the Apostles asked when the kingdom was to be restored, and when St. Peter, pointing to John, demanded "What of him?" the Saviour deigned them no reply. But if the question be a useful one propounded with good intent, we must be ever ready to give a reason for the faith that is in us. When the Apostles desired to know the meaning of a parable, or why they had failed to exorcise the demoniac boy, and when St. Peter asked to be instructed as to how often transgressors should be forgiven, the Saviour graciously acceded to their request. More often, though, our questioners' intention is evil, to embarrass and put us to shame, and then it is well to answer ambiguously or to answer question with question. Thus Christ, when asked if it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, replied indeed; but He did not take the trouble to explain that as the coin with Cæsar's image and inscription should be given to Cæsar, so the soul made to God's image and likeness should be given to God. Again, when

questioned as to the source of His authority, He confounded His tormentors with the counter-question concerning the baptism of John. It is probable, therefore, and according to St. Mark's account quite certain, that the query of to-day's Gospel was partly sincere and partly insincere; that the lawyer acted in good faith, but his followers, for whom he spoke, maliciously, for Christ first gives an answer direct and clear, and then reproves the self-wise conceit of His enemies with the, to them, perplexing difficulty of the divine and human origin of the Messias. Charity and prudence are here marvellously mingled. For the sake of the one honest soul among His auditors, Christ expounds the law of love, His action no less than His words a stinging rebuke to the hateful Pharisees. These doctors of the law, forsooth, had so inverted and perverted the Decalogue, that out of ten the insupportable burden of six hundred and thirteen precepts had been evolved, and while trifles were given prominence and rigidly enforced, the great command of charity was placed near the end of the list and utterly neglected in their teachings and practice. This was the evil Christ came to remedy; to show the world by word and deed that charity is the sum and substance of all law, the very temple of our sanctification, around which the other virtues do but serve as scaffolding for its upbuilding. For God is love, and His greatest gift to men is the love He bears them, that love which called them into being, which preserved them and redeemed them, and the most precious offering that

man can bring to God is the offering of his love. It is her love which makes the widow's mite more precious in the sight of God than all the rich man's wealth, and when the spiritually poor, the fallen, throw themselves at Jesus's feet, it is their love that covers the multitude of their sins, for much is forgiven to those only who love much. In a word, that charity is a precept infinitely important, a virtue infinitely precious, was declared when Christ pronounced its future reward: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things God hath prepared for those who love Him."

Brethren, not only in the Gospel incident of to-day, but throughout His entire earthly career, Christ taught by word and deed the law of love. His very presence was an exhortation to love, for, says St. Paul (Tit. ii.), in Christ "the love of God our Saviour appeared to all men, instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly and justly and godly in this world." His love for men, which from the beginning God had felt and repeatedly asserted, was palpably shown and proven when He sent into the world His only-begotten Son. The proof of love is the gift that love entails. Human love is but an empty sentiment expressed in words or manifested in some trifling trinket, powerless to beautify its object. But so efficient is the love of God that what He loves He also clothes with loveliness. Thus human nature in the person of Christ was glorified, and every incident of His life

from Nazareth to Calvary was but a new and stronger proof of the love of God for men. So, too, was the love of God diffused in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who was given to us, for from the price Christ paid for it we began to realize how precious in the sight of God our love must be. It was as though we had found a precious gem, and, ignorant of its value, were ready to part with it, like Esau, for a mess of pottage, when the Saviour opened our eyes to its true worth and we determined that nor honors, nor riches, nor pleasures, nor life, nor death should ever part us from the love of God. And this revelation of God's love was made to all. Many, indeed, refuse to see, and many there are that sleep, but still Christ shines, as does the sun, for all. He was born for all, He died for all, and the Gospel messages have been borne to all. "For their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." The Mosaic law was for the Jews alone, but the four Gospels, like the four rivers of paradise, swept round the world, overflowed their banks, and renewed the face of the earth. To every class the knowledge of Christ's birth was given: to the man Joseph and to the woman Mary; to the Jewish shepherds and the Gentile Magi; to aged Simeon and to John unborn; to Mary the Virgin, Anna the widow, and Elizabeth the wife; to the wise and the ignorant, the great and the lowly, the rich and the poor. In His Passion and death there played a part Jews and Gentiles, kings and commoners, priests and laics, learned and unlettered, friends

and enemies, and men and women of every age and condition in life. Finally the formal promulgation of Christianity on the first Pentecost was made in the presence of men out of every nation under heaven. Thus did the love of God appear to all men on the three great occasions, the three crucial points, in the work of the Redemption.

Brethren, the revelation of God's love was made with a twofold object—to wean our hearts from earthly things and to win them back to God, or, as St. Paul expresses it, "to instruct us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, justly, and godly in this world." On these two commandments, avoid evil and do good, depend the whole law and the prophets, for they involve that twofold law of charity according to which we should be ready to give up worldliness and to lay down our lives for God and our brethren, even as Christ laid down His life for us. For our return to God by love is the reversal of our departure from Him by sin, and in every sin there are two elements, aversion from God and conversion to creatures. It is of the very nature of the human heart to love something, and when the heart grows cold towards God and all that are His, when the practices and ceremonies of religion become a wearisome burden, then worldly desires so invade the soul that God is quickly lost sight of and utterly forgotten. How prevalent this evil was when Christ was born! How world-wide it is to-day! Men treasure up the riches, honors, and

pleasures of life and give their hearts and souls to them, and fain would they stem the steady flow of time and earthly things, so anxious are they to enjoy them permanently, so reluctant are they to pass along to God. Christ came to grapple with this evil, to reveal to us our loving Father, alone worthy of our love, to show us that for us there is no treasure here nor permanent abiding-place, but only in the kingdom of our God. And when by His example and His teaching He had exposed the hollowness of earthly things and weaned men from them; when He had weeded out the thorns and thistles from God's field, then He sowed the seeds of love—love of God, our neighbors, and ourselves. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," He says, "with all the powers of thy being, and thy neighbor as thyself." Or, as St. Paul puts it, "Thou shalt live soberly, justly, and godly in this world." A sober life is one in which Nature's law of self-love is kept by grace from becoming inordinate. All creatures of God are for our use, but abuse of them is sinful, for moderation must be exercised in everything but love of God. Sobriety, therefore, is an even balance between our natural inclinations and the restrictions of God's law, and in this golden mean consists a well-ordered love of self. Earthly pleasures, in fact, are to the joys of heaven what an appetizer is to a feast, and whosoever indulges too freely in the antepast is thereby rendered incapable of enjoying the good things that follow. The danger here is not that our self-love will fall far short of what is just, but rather

that it overstep just bounds, and hence the Saviour by His practice taught self-sacrifice and brings self-love into His teaching only by implication. But, secondly, the love of our neighbors He explicitly inculcates, for it does not come to us by nature to deal justly by all men. To live justly in this world is to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to do to him as we would wish to be done by. One might say that it was the violation of this command that caused the fall of man, for Adam, had he wished to live for others, would have reached for the fruit of the tree of life; but in partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge he betrayed his inordinately selfish ambition to be as God and to have others live for him. What true sons of Adam we are! How few of us really and practically love our fellowmen as we love ourselves! What a rare thing it is to find a man who realizes that the most precious love, the love most certain of reward, is not that which comes to, but that which goes out from him; that it is more blessed to give than to receive, to love than to be loved! If our horse or ox fall into a pit, how strenuously we labor to extricate it; if we lose a coin, how we search and sweep to find it, but when a neighbor's soul is in need, or dying, or dead, we coolly ask: "Am I my brother's keeper?" And if we love our relatives and friends alone, what thanks to us? Even the heathens do as much. "But I say to you," says Christ, "love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you." Like good St. Stephen we should send back a

shower of prayers and blessings in return for the shower of stones and similiar persecutions our enemies pour upon us. As Christians we should never lose sight of the Saviour's loving gentleness to all, nor ever cease to hear the echo of His dying words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Brethren, it were little to live soberly and justly in this world, loving one's neighbors and oneself, did one neglect the first and greatest command of all, "to live a godly life, to love the Lord our God with our whole heart, and our whole soul, and our whole mind." All our other affections must be so in line with our love of God, that while loving Him for His own sake we may love whatever else we love for the love of Him. Our entire being, too, with all its powers, our heart, our soul, our mind, should be intent on God, "looking," as says St. Paul, "for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Between youth and age there is this difference, that the old live in the memories of the past, but the young in the hopes of the future, and whosoever dearly loves his God is ever young, for he is ever looking for the blessed hope of the glory to come. Probably this was part of the Saviour's meaning when He placed that little boy in the midst of His Apostles and said to them: "Unless you become as one of these, you cannot be My true disciple, nor enter the kingdom of heaven." For lovers of God and those who do not love Him differ as do the children and the servants of a house-

hold; the latter receive monthly or yearly their sordid earthly pay and are content, but the former are the sons of God, co-heirs with Christ, and serve gratuitously, looking only for their reward on the great day of their majority—the coming of the glory of the great God. How different will that coming be from that of Sinai! How different from that of Bethlehem! And yet both Sinai and Bethlehem were necessary preparations for the final coming of the Lord. To the Israelites He came with law and majesty, the God of fear, and fear failed utterly to turn the wayward peoples back to God. Then came the God of love, the Babe of Bethlehem, who by His self-denial, His infinite charity towards all, and His absolute obedience to His heavenly Father, set before the world an object lesson in love never to be forgotten. His final coming will be in glory such that the heavens and the earth shall be filled with it, and the sun and the moon and the stars shall pale before it. Brethren, let this be the process of our sanctification and salvation, from fear, the beginning of wisdom, to the pure love of God and so on to glory. We are by nature imitators, especially of the kingly and the great. Let us then follow and imitate the King of kings. If, following His example, we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves; if we live as He did—soberly, justly, and godly in this world—be assured we shall have good reason to look forward with confidence to the blessed hope and coming of the great God our Saviour.

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

"And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Son, be of good heart; thy sins are forgiven thee." —Matt. ix. 2.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Sin general. II. Justification by faith. III. Refutation.
I. True means: 1. Baptism and Penance. 2. Virtue and Sacrament. 3. Power delegated.
II. Parts of Sacrament: 1. Contrition. 2. Confession. 3. Satisfaction.
III. De profundis: 1. There is forgiveness. 2. Conversion. 3. Example for others.
Per.: 1. Probatica. 2. Moving of waters. 3. Miracle repeated.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, it is a deplorable fact that in this world of ours few things are more common than sin. Ever since the fall of man sin has been almost a part of our very nature, for: "Behold," says the Psalmist, "we were begotten in iniquities, and in sin did our mothers conceive us." And besides that original and hereditary guilt, each of us has added to the world's wickedness many actual, personal transgressions, for, says St. John: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Is it not strange, then, that notwithstanding the prevalence and dreadful nature of this spiritual disease, the Christian world should be divided as to its proper remedy? One of the very few tenets upon which the various Protestant sects are united is the doctrine of justification by faith. In the face of innumerable texts of Scripture implying or

openly asserting that faith without good works is dead, these scriptural Christians, forsooth, maintain that we achieve forgiveness of our sins by faith alone, by apprehending Christ as the Saviour, and hiding ourselves and our iniquities beneath the broad mantle of His holiness. Belief in Christ, say they, is threefold; belief in the truth of all His works, belief in His power to do all things, and belief in the sufficiency of His merits to cancel all our sins, and this last alone is, they claim, the means of our justification. In refutation of such preposterous doctrine suffice it to say that though Christ on various occasions commended faith as a necessary condition for the restoration of bodily and spiritual health, still He often elsewhere assigns other dispositions—fear, sorrow, love, etc.—as the occasions of His indulgence. Of Magdalen, for example, He said that "much had been forgiven her because she had loved much." Besides, even where faith is mentioned by Him as His mercy's motive, it is evident that He speaks of belief, not in the efficacy of His merits, of which the parties concerned as yet knew nothing, but of belief in His unlimited miraculous power. Finally, the faith applauded by Christ in those instances was very often not at all that of those whom He healed or absolved, but of those who carried the afflicted before Him or besought Him on behalf of the dying or the dead. Thus, Protestants prove too little or too much, that is, they prove nothing.

Brethren, the Catholic Church holds, and has always held, that Baptism and Penance are the two

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chief means whereby we obtain pardon from God for our sins. That original stain which we inherit with our nature, as well as all actual sins of the unchristened adult, are removed by the grace of Baptism. The remedy for sins committed after Baptism is Penance. "Penance," says St. Jerome, "is, as it were, a plank from the wreck of his baptismal innocence, on which depends the Christian's sole hope of salvation." Faith and fear and hope and love are necessary, yes, but of themselves they do not suffice. They are as so many steps by which the sinner ascends to such exalted virtue that he conceives and manifests a heartfelt sorrow for his sins, not only on account of their intrinsic malice, but more especially because they are offensive to God. Sin's remedy must be as drastic as sin itself. "The sinner," says the Psalmist, "puts on iniquity like a garment, and it goes like water into his entrails, and like oil into his bones." Sin palsies the soul more completely than did his disease the poor cripple of to-day's Gospel, and nothing but that thorough revulsion of its whole being which we call Penance can ever effect its recovery. In the Old Law the virtue of penance was the only means by which forgiveness of sins could be obtained. From Adam to John the Baptist the scriptural message to the sinner was to be converted to the Lord by bringing forth fruits worthy of penance and pardon. It was on account of, and in recognition of, their repentance, and their repentance alone, that God led Israel out of captivity, averted the doom impending over the great city of Ninive, and

spared and pardoned David and Ezechias, and Manasses and Achab. So accustomed, indeed, were God's chosen people to regard man's repentance and God's mercy as the essential elements in every reconciliation of the Creator with His creatures, that we find them in to-day's Gospel taking exception to Christ's apparently blasphemous words and sharply demanding: "Who can forgive sins but God?" Their idea was that the forgiving of sins demanded omniscience and omnipotence; omniscience, to know the worthiness of the penitent's disposition, and omnipotence, to obliterate his fault. But Christ, though they knew it not, was God, and He had come not to destroy but to perfect the law, by raising the virtue of penance to the dignity of a sacrament. That Christ as God had the power of forgiving sins needs no demonstration; it is evident from the very definition of sin. That Christ as man enjoyed the same authority, is equally clear, for He says of Himself: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth," and in to-day's Gospel He rebukes the unbelief of the bystanders by healing the man sick of the palsy, that from His ability to cure bodily ills they might learn that the Son of man hath also power on earth to forgive sins. This power in its fulness He imparted to His Apostles. "As the Father hath sent Me," He says to them, "so also do I send you," that is, with all necessary faculties for the continuance and accomplishment of His earthly mission. To Peter first, and later to all the Apostles, He said: "I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of

heaven; and whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven," and in one of His apparitions to them after His Resurrection, "He breathed on them, and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Nor was this concession a personal grant made by Christ to His Apostles on behalf of their fellow-countrymen or their contemporaries. He is the Redeemer, not of this people or that, this or that generation, but of all men of all time, and by virtue of his ordination every successor of the Apostles is clothed with this same celestial power. By reason of her unbroken Apostolic succession, therefore, the priests of the Catholic Church are the only real ministers of Christ, and the only true dispensers of this as well as of His other sacramental mysteries. For, in the sanctifying grace communicated to the soul on the remission of its sins by that outward sign, the absolution of the priest, and the manifestation of sorrow by the penitent, instituted by Christ, we have the three essential elements of a sacrament of the New Law. In its administration the priests act as the vice-gerents, the plenipotentiaries, of Christ on earth, of whom He said: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth the Father that sent Me."

Brethren, the Sacrament of Penance does not consist merely in the authoritative pronouncement of the

absolution by the priest. Three conditions—contrition, confession, and satisfaction—are necessary on the part of the penitent for its valid and fruitful reception. The natural process of reconciliation was raised by the law to a higher grade, and finds its ultimate perfection in the Gospel. Christ's choice of a little child as the model of spiritual perfection has a broad and deep significance. When as boys we had the misfortune to offend our earthly father by some childish prank, it was usually through the medium of a mother's love that we sought and obtained forgiveness. But the father's pardon was not accorded nor the happy relations of favor and love reëstablished without certain necessary preliminaries. We humbly approached our offended parent and openly acknowledged our fault, but that was not enough. We expressed our sorrow, nor did that suffice. We promised to guard against the recurrence of such misdeeds; but still there was something wanting. It was only when we had done all that, and had offered besides to make good by some personal sacrifice the damage done, that the smile of love returned to his countenance and his fond arms opened. By a similar process are His wayward children restored to the grace of their heavenly Father. The sorrow necessary in the Sacrament of Penance is clearly not that perfect contrition which of itself effects justification, for otherwise the sacrament would be a superfluous institution. It is rather attrition, or a sorrow for sin inspired by some less exalted motive than the pure love of God. Still we must never lose

sight of the fact that the deeper our sorrow the more efficacious will be the sacrament, for the one essential on which the whole fruitfulness or barrenness of the sacrament depends is the genuineness of our contrition. We should try to emulate the great models of repentance, the humility of the publican and of the prodigal, the tears of David and of Peter, the ecstatic abandon of Magdalen, the consuming zeal of St. Paul, and the utter disregard of earthly things and earthly opinions displayed by the Emperor Theodosius when he cast aside his crown and his purple, and in the presence of all the people prostrated himself in the dust before the temple of God. In to-day's Gospel Christ absolves the paralytic without the formality of a confession; but Christ's ministers cannot, as He, read the reins and the heart. To the confessor as judge and physician the case must be presented and the disease disclosed. While it is well to manifest even our venial faults, it is absolutely necessary to confess all the mortal sins we are then and there conscious of having committed, together with the number of times and the leading circumstances of their commission. Alas! what care, what order, what exactness are employed in the management of business affairs, in the keeping of business accounts, and how true it is that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Nor is it of least importance to remember that, though the Sacrament of Penance remits the guilt of sin and the eternal punishment that is its due, there remains a temporal atonement to be under-

gone in this world or the next for the satisfaction of God's offended justice. That the damage done our neighbor by our trespasses must be made good is clear enough; but we often fail to realize that God's claims, too, must be satisfied, and we neglect to discharge by trivial penances here debts which we will be able to cancel hereafter only by the protracted pains of purgatory. "They who fear the frost," says the Scripture, "shall be overtaken by the blizzard."

Brethren, I would that all sinners would read often and carefully the sixth Penitential Psalm, the "De Profundis," and see and hear there the awakening of conscience, the realization of sin and its consequences, the voice of hope, and the possibility of forgiveness and of ultimate salvation for all. "If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities," says the Psalmist, "Lord, who shall stand?" There are times when we feel with Cain that our iniquities are greater than that we may deserve pardon, and were it not for such examples of God's mercy as David, Manasses, Mary Magdalen, Simon Peter, the thief on the cross, and Saul of Tarsus, we should succumb to a Judas-like despair. From their histories we learn that with God there is merciful forgiveness even for the worst of sinners. "I wish not the death of the sinner," He says, "but rather that he be converted and live." John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." His blood, the blood of the New Testament, infinitely meritorious, was poured out for us unto the remission of our sins, and were our sins as scarlet the

blood of the Lamb of God is redder still. Stayed on our way to despair by this voice of hope, we, by reason of His law of mercy, wait for the Lord. Out of the depth of our iniquities we cry to Him: "Lord, hear my voice, and let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication." "Our souls rely on His word and our souls have hope in the Lord." Nor will ours be a disappointed hope, for, "an humble and contrite heart the merciful Lord will never despise." And when the sweet grace of conversion has taken possession of our souls, and we feel ourselves once more restored to the condition of children of God and heirs of heaven, then a sense of gratitude and love such as filled the hearts of the afflicted whom Christ healed opens our lips to proclaim to the whole world what great things He that is mighty hath done to us and how hallowed should be His name. Nor do we forget our late companions in sin. "From the morning watch even until night let Israel hope in the Lord." If we have found forgiveness, surely there must be hope for all, "for with the Lord there is mercy and with Him plentiful redemption. Be comforted and encouraged, therefore, O Israel, for the Lord shall redeem thee from all thine iniquities."

Brethren, there was at Jerusalem a pond having five porches, and at certain times its waters were moved by an angel of the Lord, and he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the waters was healed of his infirmities. The Sacrament of Penance, with its five requisites, is the Probatica

of the New Jerusalem, and the feelings that at times, in your better moments, come over you—feelings of fear of God, of disgust for sin, of desire for something higher and purer and nobler than your present life, of love for God—these are as the moving of the waters by the angel of the Lord. Delay not, I beg of you; delay not to avail yourself of this means of sanctification. Consider how Christ has labored to make it easy for you. Justification under the law was almost as painful, almost as impossible, as it was for the cripple to reach first the waters of Probatica, but under the Gospel you have but to turn penitently to Christ, and by a word of His mouth you will be made whole. Lay your sin-palsied soul before Him, then, in the tribunal of penance, and doubt not the blessed result. Your spiritual, aye your physical life and health will be restored; your fellow-sinners will be comforted and encouraged and ultimately led to God by your example; and God's glory will be promoted, for the multitudes, seeing your conversion and your restoration to the friendship of God and God's Church through the Sacrament of Penance, will fear and glorify God who hath given such power to men.

Rosary Sunday.

THE HOLY ROSARY.

"A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of stars."—Apoc. xii. 1.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. John's vision. II. Origin of Rosary. III. Division.
I. Its enemies: 1. Names of Mary and God. 2. Idolatry. 3. Senseless repetition.
II. Prayers: 1. Vocal and mental. 2. Prayers of Rosary. 3. Meditations.
III. Excellence: 1. Suitable to all. 2. Support in need. 3. Its victories.
Per.: 1. Theory and practice. 2. Practice without merit. 3. Worthy practice.

SERMON.

"AND a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of stars. And being in labor she was in pain to be delivered. And there was another sign in heaven—the red dragon Satan ready to devour the fruit of her womb. And when she brought forth there was a great battle in heaven, wherein the angels of God cast out Satan and his angels. And I heard a voice saying: Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of God and the power of His Christ." Such, my brethren, is the account, in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, of Mary's first glorious victory over the enemy of mankind. History has repeated itself since then, for in the thirteenth century we again be-

hold the dragon—now the dragon of heresy—preparing to destroy the dogmas of our faith—the fair offspring of Mary, the Mother of Wisdom. But once again she appears in the heavens, and taking from her head its starry crown, she makes of it a rosary, and placing it in the hands of St. Dominic, she bids him arm his followers therewith, and lead them against the powers of darkness. Then the demons of error and of sin fly before them, so that once again the heavenly voice proclaims the kingdom of God reëstablished and the power of His Christ restored.

Brethren, this being the month and to-day being the feast of the most holy Rosary, we will do well to reflect a little on this beautiful devotion. Let us see first, what its enemies say against it; second, what its advocates say for it, and third and lastly, whether the voice of our conscience numbers us among its friends or among its enemies.

What do its enemies say against it? A fanatical opposition to God's holy Mother and to the homage paid her by Catholics has ever been the distinguishing mark of Protestantism. While professing unbounded admiration for womankind and for motherhood they still have no respect for the ideal woman —the Virgin of Virgin Mothers. Hence it is not strange that they should find fault with a method of prayer wherein the name of Mary is repeated with that of the Godhead in proportion of ten times to one. They remind us of St. Paul's words, that "there is one name and one only at the sound of

which every knee in heaven and on earth and in hell shall bend—than which there is no other name under heaven given to man whereby we must be saved"—the sacred name of Jesus. Yet, they say, you Catholics deify Mary and relegate the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to the position of lesser divinities. Nay, more; they accuse us of taking to ourselves a graven thing—a few beads strung on a wire—a monkish invention—and making them the talisman of hope, the idol of men's love. As for the prayers themselves—why, they ask, why this monotonous mummery? Why this eternal repetition of the selfsame prayer? Why indeed, if not that the devotion of the Rosary is essentially Catholic, and therefore essentially wrong.

Brethren, when we Catholics desire direction in the practice of our religion we are not likely to appeal to our Protestant brethren for instruction. Of them are true the words of St. Paul, that "they understand not either the things they say or whereof they affirm." In fact, making due allowance for prejudice, what they deny is generally true, and what they affirm is to be denied. We do not deify Mary, neither do we adore her, but we honor her, first as the Mother of our God and again for her own transcendent virtues. So transcendent indeed that the Son of God Himself, like another Solomon, stepped down from His royal throne to raise her to a place by His side. Aye! and we hear Him address her in Solomon's words: "Speak, Mother, for I cannot refuse thy petition." Therefore when we appeal to the throne

of grace we do so through Mary, honoring God by honoring His Mother, imitating Him by exalting her, touching the most responsive chord in the sacred heart of Christ with the sweet name of Mary. For who of you does not remember his childhood days and the boyish ruse by which you secured favors from your earthly father? Did you go to him boldly and demand the desired pocket-money? No; for there was about him a stern dignity that overawed. But freely and confidently you went to your good mother to present your petition, and you saw your father smile with pleasure, and your mother returning to you radiant, with double the amount. Brethren, it was not without reason that Our Lord pointing to a little boy said to His Apostles: "To be My disciples you must become as one of these," for the nearer our devotions come to the simple and loving methods of a child, the more perfect they are. Such, I say, is the devotion of the Rosary. Nor do we pay to the mere beads and wire any superstitious worship or attribute to them any magic power, but we cherish the beads as a gift from Mary herself, as an article consecrated to devotion by the blessing of God's minister, as a blessed chain that constantly leads back our wandering thoughts to God and holy things. We repeat the same prayer over and over again just as a child will repeat and repeat and repeat again his question or request till it be granted. True, prayer does not consist in much speaking, says Christ; that is, not long and eloquent discourses, but a short simple request perseveringly repeated. The

omniscient intellect of God requires no circumlocutions to understand our needs, but His will demands perseverance on our part before it is moved to relieve them. Thus we see Abraham holding back the arm of God's wrath from Sodom and Gomorrha by a simple but oft-repeated request. What variety is there in a holding up of the hands or the blowing of a trumpet? Yet that simple act, persevered in all day, procured for Moses a victory over his enemies, and for Josue the ruin of the walls of Jericho. The stern judge yielding at last to the widow's petition was overcome not by her eloquence but by her importunity. The baker rising in the night to serve his customer yielded not to his arguments but to his monotonous knocking. Of Christ in His agony we read that He went and fell prostrate three times, and three times He prayed the selfsame prayer. Thus you see that the recitation of the Rosary, far from being a vain and tedious repetition, is of all prayers the one best suited to the childlike nature of a true Christian, and most closely resembling the model Christ gave us by His teaching and example.

But if we analyze this devotion we will find in itself still further proof of its excellence. Vocal prayer is good, but it may be rendered void by distractions; mental prayer is better, but it may be defective through lack of vocal expression; but a prayer that is at the same time vocal and mental is, all things being equal, essentially perfect. Now such is the Rosary, the idea of which is to keep the mind engaged in holy meditations, while the lips are singing

the praises of God. Again, if we care to further analyze this twofold element—the vocal part and the mental part—we will find in the former a series of prayers the most perfect the Church possesses, and in the latter a series of the most salutary reflections of which the mind of man is capable. A lively faith is the groundwork of all prayer, for how can men praise a God whom they know not, or ask benefits of Him in whom they do not believe? Hence, the Rosary begins with that grand profession of faith, the sign of the cross, wherein is expressed a belief in the threefold mystery of the unity of God's nature, of the Trinity of the divine persons, and of the Incarnation. Then, as though ill-content with so brief an exposition of his belief, the pious follower of the Rosary is next led on to give a fuller declaration of his faith in the inspired words of the Apostles' Creed. Thus he declares himself not only a believer but a stanch defender of all the truths from the Alpha to the Omega of Christian doctrine. Then begins the Rosary proper. First comes the "Our Father," of the excellence of which prayer it is enough to say that it is the sublimest of all prayers, having Christ Himself for its Author, and containing as it does a petition for every blessing pertaining to man's temporal and spiritual welfare. The "Hail Mary" follows, in which with loving persistency we repeat the words God addressed to Mary through the Angel Gabriel, while with St. Elizabeth we congratulate her on the great things the Omnipotent hath done to her. And as often as we recall Mary's transcendent dignity as

the Mother of God, so often do we in the "Holy Mary," invoke her powerful intercession for us poor sinners now, and especially at the hour of our death. Finally, as though to head off a Protestant objection, we at the end of each decade turn from Mary, her honor and perfections, to Mary's Creator, the sole Author of her greatness, the one Source of all good things, and we say, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

But beautiful as are the vocal prayers of the Rosary, the accompanying meditations are not less praiseworthy—a fitting accompaniment for so sweet a melody. "If," says St. Bernard, "you would avoid going down to hell after your death, you must frequently go down there by meditation during your life." With equal good reason may we say if we would go to heaven in eternity, we must accustom our thoughts to go there often in time. But how can we do this better than by following in spirit the footsteps of our divine Guide—Jesus Christ? Hence we divide His history into fifteen parts or mysteries, and we allot one mystery to each decade, and thus we proceed, as He did and as every true disciple of His must do, from joy through sorrow to glory.

We see the gentle Virgin once again in her humble home, and we see the resplendent Gabriel coming with his tidings of great joy to her and all mankind. We hear Mary and Elizabeth blend their voices in magnifying the Lord for choosing them to be the mothers of men greater than whom have never been born of women, and we kneel again by the

crib in the stable of Bethlehem. Again we hear the "*Nunc Dimittis*" of holy Simeon, and again we gaze in mingled joy and wonder on the fair boy in the midst of the holy doctors in the Temple. But, as for Christ, so for His true disciples, there is no joy without its latent woe, hence, we meditate next on the sorrowful mysteries. We go in spirit to the garden of Gethsemani, and kneel by the side of the agonized Christ. We listen to the horrible echo of the leaded thong, as each brawny savage rains blow after blow on the quivering shoulders of our poor Saviour, and we stand by while the huge thorns are being pressed down and in till they grate on His sacred skull. Then we take up our cross and follow Him on and up the heights of Calvary and there immolate ourselves in spirit by the side of our crucified Lord. Finally, as if to carry out the idea that after the cross of tribulation—and only after the cross—comes the crown of glory, we rise with Him from the sepulchre in which our sins have entombed us, and soaring above and beyond the reach of human joy and human sorrow we enter with Him, glorified, into the kingdom of His Father. When we have thus ascended to God in thought, the Holy Spirit of God descends on us in reality, calling up for our meditations the picture of His first descent on the twelve Apostles. In the midst of that group we see Mary—Mary, who, now that her earthly mission is accomplished, presently closes her eyes in the sweet sleep of death, and is taken up body and soul into heaven, whither we accompany her, to assist with the angels

and the saints at her glorious coronation. Brethren, such are the beautiful thoughts that occupy the mind while our lips are praising God in language commended by Himself, and our hands keeping time to our thoughts and words on a little instrument invented for her wayward children by our own loving Mother. Every faculty of our mind and body is by this method of prayer brought into play and directed heavenward, so that with right good reason one of the Fathers has said of the Rosary that it is the queen of indulgenced devotions.

Not least among the many excellences of this prayer is its suitability to all classes of men—to every condition of life. It is the devotion of the family circle. Many of us will remember the old homestead of long ago, where, at the quiet evening hour, our good parents and their little ones knelt around the hearth and joined with simple fervor in reciting the Rosary. Who does not remember that happy moment when for the first time it was his proud privilege to lisp his own decade? For so simple is this devotion that the merest child can practice it; so easy that the most uncultivated mind can follow it. It inspires thoughts worthy of the loftiest intellect, emotions that satisfy the cravings of the most fervent heart, and aspirations that lead innumerable souls to God. It unites all, high and low, in the bonds of equality and brotherhood. I have in my mind at the present moment a little chapel where you may often see a royal queen and a lowly peasant addressing the same prayers to the same Mary,

Queen of the Rosary. We find instances in history where the Christian soldier, defeated in his struggle for faith and fatherland, has turned the tide of battle by an appeal to Mary of the Rosary. We see the great O'Connell wincing under the fiery eloquence of his opponent, but preparing himself by reciting the Rosary for that grand effort of his which procured hope for the country he loved full well, and freedom for the Church he loved better still. Besides these victories, who will recount its spiritual conquests, the hardened hearts moved to repentance, the despairing souls it has snatched from the edge of hell and returned to God! In fine, it is the badge of the noblest of God's creatures, of the gentle Sisters of Charity on the battlefield and in the hospital, and of the intrepid missioners in the wilderness.

Brethren, do we appreciate the full value of this devotion? Are we its friends or are we its enemies? We are, you say, its friends, But alas! as many a man will say: "I am a Catholic, but I cannot say I practice my religion," so many of us will have to say: "I approve of the Rosary, but I cannot say I practice it." To each I say equally: "Stuff and nonsense; there is no Catholic but a practical Catholic, and there is no friend of the Rosary but he who practices it often and well." "He that is not with me is against me," is not less true of Christ than it is of the Church and the Rosary. Your Protestant friend refuses the honor due to the Queen of the Rosary and you resent it, but if you practice not this devotion your action is inconsistent, for the Protestant

only openly declares the disrespect for Mary which you by your neglect tacitly avow. Hence since God both hears men's words and reads men's thoughts, you are no better before God than he. Nay, you are worse—for he knowing not the truth lives consistently with his error, but you knowing the truth neglect to conform your life thereto. Again, there are many who do practise this devotion, who really do recite the Rosary every day; but how do they recite it? Ah, with them it is not a unison of mental and oral prayer—with them it is all oral—all words—and words pronounced, alas, not in a human manner, but after the method of a parrot or a speaking-machine. Truly, such a practice is but little better than absolute neglect. Nay, I would even venture to say that rather than recite the Rosary thus, it would be better not to attempt to say it at all, for the indifference of her children hurts the tender heart of our Mother less than their positive disrespect. But there are others who recite the beads every day and recite them well, and of these I say, may God and His holy Mother bless them, and enable them to persevere and lead others to imitate them. Let this be your devotion in Church and in the home circle always, but especially during this month of the Rosary. You will find that in your individual souls and in the community at large will be accomplished another triumph of the angels of virtue over the angels of sin—and again the heavenly voice will proclaim the kingdom of God reëstablished upon earth and the power of His Christ restored.

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

The Denial and its Consequences.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son."—Matt. xxii. 2.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. History of religion. II. Mercy and justice. III. Infidelity, faith, charity.

I. Marriage: 1. Proposal. 2. Betrothment. 3. Ends in view.

II. Invitation: 1. Patriarchs and prophets. 2. Apostles. 3. Dives and Lazarus.

III. Call rejected: 1. Jews. 2. Gentiles. 3. Faith and charity.

Per.: Parable a lesson in faith, hope, and charity.

SERMON.

Brethren, the parable of to-day's Gospel, brief as it is, sums up the entire history of religion. It is a story of divine mercy and justice on the one hand, and of human ingratitude and its consequent punishment on the other. It deals with the one event, the incarnation, around which cluster all the other facts of sacred history. With that mystery as a standpoint, glancing into the past and again into the future, it divides the whole human race into unbelievers and believers, and the latter it subdivides into those who believe only in word and in tongue, and those who believe in deed and in truth. Believers and doers of God's will are admitted, but unbelievers and mere believers are either admitted only to be ignominiously expelled, or utterly excluded from the celestial banquet prepared for the blessed in the kingdom of the Father.

A certain king made a marriage for his son. The king is God the Father, and the marriage, the union of the divine and human natures in the single personality of Jesus Christ. Most appropriately, indeed, is the incarnation likened to a marriage. First came the betrothment; the declaration of the divine Son's love, as sung by the inspired Solomon in the Canticle of Canticles, and His promises to the patriarchs and the prophets. Then the Father, through Gabriel, announced to Mary His will and His consent, and she, the mother of regenerated humanity, answered for her daughter: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word." Then the marriage, whereby in very truth two become one—two natures so closely united in one person that, unlike other marriages, not even death itself could separate them. Thenceforward, too, the Royal Prince and His lowly peasant spouse shared all things in common; she, His supernatural attributes, and He, her human infirmities. Nay more, a certain familiarity, a certain relationship was thus established between the relatives and followers of each; that happy intercourse between earth and heaven known as the communion of saints. Finally, the usual ends for which royal marriages are contracted are apparent here. There was the love of the betrothed; God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son. There was the dire warfare of earth with heaven, which ended only at the incarnation, when the angels proclaimed: "Glory to God and peace to men." There were the rich

possessions of the bridegroom, to which humanity longed to be made heir. There was need of a remedy for sin, and "it is," says St. Paul, "a true saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came to save sinners." There were vacant thrones in heaven, and no heirs apparent, but when the Word became flesh, God gave as many as received Him the power to be made the sons of God because "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Rightly, therefore, is the hypostatic union called a marriage which the King of kings made for His divine Son.

And He sent His servants to call them that were invited to the marriage, and they would not come. Notice they had been already invited and are now simply reminded that the happy day has come. For ages the patriarchs and prophets had foretold to the Jews the future incarnation of the Son of God, and bade them prepare, besides the robe of faith, the nuptial garment of charity; but now, when John the Baptist, the Apostles and disciples, bid them to the long-looked-for feast, they refuse to come. But God, rich in mercy and patience, sent other servants, saying: "Behold I have prepared My dinner; all things are ready; come ye to the wedding." This second band of messengers are the selfsame Apostles and disciples, but they are called "other servants" because upon them, in the meantime, the Holy Ghost had descended. Thus (I. King x.) Samuel says to Saul: "The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee and thou shalt be changed into another

man." The Apostles after Christ's Ascension, transformed by the Spirit from timid men into heroes, made a second and more impassioned appeal to the Jews to admit the incarnation and embrace Christianity. But no; the Jews neglected; and while some went their ways to their farms and their merchandise, others treated the King's servants contumeliously and put them to death. You may think, perhaps, that this king, to faithfully represent God, should have sent his servants with invitations to the poor rather than to the rich, but remember that possessors of great wealth are oftenest, in the sight of God, the poorest of the poor. It is a sad commentary on them that the rich, in the ages of persecution, were ever the first to apostatize. "Give up all and follow Me" is for the rich man, at all times, even at death, a fearful trial which the poor man is happily spared. It is sadder still that a man's riches and his relish for spiritual things follow an inverse ratio. Talk to Dives of faith or the nuptial garment of charity! Pshaw! Purple and fine linen, or even the workaday garments of the shop or counting-house, are good enough for him. What cares he for a banquet of spiritual delights! Let Lazarus have all that and welcome, but for himself, he is content to feast sumptuously and more substantially every day. It is saddest of all, that, in the attainment of their coveted millions, they will not allow even human lives to block their way. Dives's millions! how many human lives do they represent; how many neglected opportunities; how many tears of widow and orphan; how

many broken hearts; how many citizens disfranchised; how many laws perverted; how many crimes of oppression, extortion, injustice, cry from their midst to heaven for vengeance!

"And the king, being angry, sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned their city." From the past the parable now turns to the future, and foretells the most signal instance of divine vengeance that history affords—the siege and capture and destruction of Jerusalem. Thirty-seven years after Christ's Ascension, a Roman army, guided and aided from on high, attacked the Jewish capital, captured and enslaved ninety-seven thousand; slew sixteen hundred thousand; burned the Temple and razed the city to the ground. Forbearance had ceased to be a virtue, and God slew those murderers and burned their city. The wedding, indeed, was ready, but they that were invited were not worthy. What food for reflection here, my Brethren! How often since then has Christ's invitation to that feast, where He is both host and banquet, been scornfully refused or neglected! "Come to Me," He says, "all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." But men mistrust Him. They fear His yoke is neither sweet nor His burden light, and so they turn from Him to the world, its allurements and its slavery. As surely as the darkness follows the light, so surely will God's vengeance overtake these men and destroy these murderers of their own souls, and burn those temples of pleasure, their vile bodies. But God's mercy, though superseded for a moment

by His justice, was by no means exhausted. Once again He sent forth His servants into the highways to gather together as many as they found, both bad and good, till the wedding was filled with guests. It was the call of the Gentiles to the Christian faith, that call that has rung down the ages, that has rung out to-day from so many Catholic pulpits; from the steeples of so many Christian temples. The royal banquet-hall is to-day the Christian Church, and the vast numbers of baptized Christians therein collected speak volumes for the assiduity of the King's servants and the docility of those they invited. The proud, self-sufficient Jew thanked God he was not like other men, and spurned the invitation; but the lowly Gentile, though the call came to him second-hand, bowed an humble acknowledgment, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner," and accepted it without question. The wedding was filled with guests and the King's heart, though still yearning for His own, His chosen ones, was consoled, nevertheless, as was the heart of the prodigal's father by the continuous presence of his dutiful son. But among His guests He sees one who has not on the wedding-garment of charity. Many had come, both good and bad—many clothed in the filth and rags of iniquity, but by the bounty of the host and the efforts of His servants all but one had been clothed in that garment that covereth a multitude of sins. One persisted in outraging the etiquette of the occasion, and, once again, mercy gave place to justice and he is cast out into the exterior darkness.

Herein the parable follows the course of religion even to our own times by refuting the arch-heresy of the latter days—the Protestant theory of salvation. "The good alone," say they, "belong to the Church, and faith alone shall save them." But the parable teaches that faith may be possessed by and procure admission alike for bad and good, but that if one lack charity he is, though admitted, practically an outcast. Think of it, Brethren, there are numbers of Christians in the world, in this parish, here to-day, led to Church every Sunday by a sense of duty, the outgrowth of their faith, who imagine they are thus fulfilling the whole law, but who, because they have not charity, because they are habitually in the state of mortal sin, are little better than reprobates, and, but for God's mercy, would have been long since irrevocably cast into exterior darkness. But God's mercy surpasseth all understanding. So, as one accepts the invitation at all, however unworthy he may be, there is still hope that God will do the rest, for He temporizes and would fain be friends with the very worst. Especially is this so under the law of mercy—the Christian dispensation. Of all the guests only one was expelled. On the judgment day, it may be that from the many called few will be chosen. But that thought should not be a discouragement to Christians. Of those invited second-hand one only was found unworthy. Up to the time of Christ, practically all had refused the invitation and were lost; so that were even all Christians, or, as I confidently believe, the vast majority of Christians

to be saved, it would still be true on the judgment day that "many were called but few were chosen."

Brethren, to-day's parable is the most marvellous piece of history ever written, recounting with equal exactness events of the past and future, summing up in a few words the religious history of centuries, inculcating the soundest moral, and teaching the deepest dogmatic truths, refuting errors ages before they had arisen. How truly did the Jews say of Christ: "Never did man speak as this man!" He exhibits to us His mercy, ever foremost, but His justice, too, glancing over mercy's shoulder ready to strike after the days of forbearance. He teaches, moreover, that not every man who says "Lord, Lord," shall be saved, but he who doeth the will of the Father, he shall be saved. A firm faith, an abiding hope, an ardent charity, these, together with an humble bearing and a docile mind, are the chief requisites for the ideal Christian who would fain be not only as one called of God, but also as His chosen friend in the kingdom of heaven.

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost.

THE GROUNDS OF FAITH.

"*Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not.*"—John iv. 48.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. St. Januarius's blood. II. Seeing and believing. III. Thomas and Peter.
I. History: 1. Miracles often useful. 2. Capharnaum. 3. Nazareth.
II. Towns: 1. Prerequisites for miracles. 2. Nazareth rejects Him. 3. Woe to Capharnaum.
III. Persons: 1. In Samaria and Capharnaum. 2. Mary. 3. Faith always demanded.
Per.: 1. Modern miracles. 2. Proper attitude. 3. Invisible miracles.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, in the old Italian city of Naples there is a vial of St. Januarius's blood, which, though hard and dry on all other occasions, is miraculously liquified on the saint's festal day. I remember standing for hours by the side of an infidel watching and waiting for the miracle. At length it took place, but having, unfortunately, turned aside for a moment, I saw it not; my companion saw it and believed. Behold herein the mercy and the justice of God. By carnal means He would fain have enlightened, howsoever imperfectly, that darkened soul with some glimmer of faith in Christ, but from me, a Catholic, a priest, He exacts that higher and more perfect faith which, independent of signs and wonders can turn to Christ, and on the sole testimony of His word confess that verily He is the Son of the living God. And so it is and ever has been. The

faith most precious in the sight of God is not that founded on the miraculous, but faith blind and unquestioning. There is, in one respect, a close analogy between faith and contrition, for just as contrition is imperfect or perfect according as it springs from fear of sin's material consequences or from the pure love of God, so faith is imperfect or perfect in proportion as it climbs gradually upwards on the evidence of miracles, or soars above and beyond them directly to the throne of God. The primary object of Christ's ministry was, that men might believe in Him to life everlasting on the evidence, not of His works, but of His words. It was only when His words failed of their effect that He had recourse to signs and wonders, saying: "If you believe not My words, believe at least My works." The miracles of His lifetime and of the Church's earlier years were wrung from an unwilling Christ by the very necessity of the case: viz., because He had to deal with a stiff-necked, stubborn, unbelieving race. "Unless," He says, "you see signs and wonders you believe not." What thanks to you if, having seen them, you believe? Ah! how Christ's sacred heart must have longed for some one who would first openly confess Him and afterwards, if need be, seek evidence to strengthen his faith! How it must have thrilled with pleasure when it found such a one—when the poor father of the lunatic boy fell at His feet crying: "Lord, I believe. Lord, help my unbelief!" Brethren, this is the truth I would have you learn this morning—the secondary position of mira-

cles in the Christian dispensation: that they take from faith its true value and merit. I would not have you be a doubting Thomas refusing to believe in the risen Saviour, unless you put your hand into His side and your fingers into the place of the nails; but like blessed Peter, relying not on the testimony of flesh and blood, but on the revelation of your heavenly Father, I would have you blindly and unhesitatingly confess Christ to be the Son of the living God. And as, for that grand profession of faith, Christ made Peter the rock whereon to build His Church, so will He make your faith, if like to Peter's, the base for a superstructure of virtue that will reach and carry you up to the very throne of God. For "blessed are they that have not seen and have believed."

Brethren, briefly stated, my contention is this: Miracles as stimulators of faith are a lamentable necessity rather than an unmixed blessing. They served their purpose in the hands of Christ confronting a bigoted and a pagan world; in the hands of the infant Church struggling for existence; in the hands of a Francis Xavier in the van of civilization and Christianity. They are useful in a Lourdes, to stem the rising tide of infidelity, and in a Naples, where Nature is so beautifully arrayed that the people would fain worship her as a God; but in an ideal Christian community there should be no place, no necessity for them. For faith, according to St. Paul, is the substance of things to be hoped for; the evidence of things that appear not. The evident substantial

basis of belief in Christ is the submission to and reliance on His word alone, and without such faith it is impossible to perfectly please God. Take the community of Capharnaum as a case in point. Of all the towns of Galilee it was the most favored, as the home of Christ and the scene of His greatest miracles. It lies on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee; twenty-five miles to the southwest is Cana, and a few miles further on, Nazareth, while eighty miles to the south lies Jerusalem. When Jesus inaugurated His public ministry by the changing of the water into wine at Cana, He was on His way from Nazareth to Capharnaum, and for the rest of His stay in Galilee, Capharnaum was His home. Here lived the fishermen, Peter and Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee; here Matthew was called from his office in the custom-house to be an Apostle and an Evangelist. In the local Synagogue Jesus expounded His doctrines, among others, you remember, the forgiveness of sins, but the people believed not. Then, and then only, did He prove His words by signs and wonders, such as the cure of the man sick of palsy. The opportunity He gave them for the exercise of perfect faith they rejected, and regretfully He had recourse to miracles. And what stupendous miracles! Not to mention the miracle of Cana a few miles away, in Capharnaum itself occurred the cure of the ruler's son and of the man possessed by an unclean spirit. What a commentary it was on the incredulity of the people that that spirit instantly confessed Christ to be the Holy One of God! Here,

too, He raised up Peter's mother-in-law from a raging fever, and cleansed the lepers, and cured the palsied. Here He healed the centurion's servant, and the woman afflicted with an issue of blood, and here He raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. In the little harbor the Apostles at His word took the miraculous draught of fishes; farther out on the lake He stilled the storm at sea; on the opposite shore He multiplied the loaves and fishes, and on the return voyage that same night He came walking on the waters to the rescue of His storm-tossed followers. These are but a few of the hundreds of recorded and unrecorded miracles performed in or near Capharnaum. So many indeed that His native town of Nazareth became so wildly jealous that on His return His fellow-citizens attempted to fling Him over a cliff for refusing to repeat among them the wonders He had done at Capharnaum. Now see the proofs of my contention. It appears that as a necessary condition for miracle-working Christ demanded at least the beginnings of faith, which beginnings He then would raise by miracles to a higher, but far from perfect, development. So intimate with Him as boy and man were the Nazarenes that they could see in Him only the son of Joseph, the village carpenter. "Jesus," says the Gospel, "marvelled at their incredulity and could do no miracles among them." They demanded the carnal realism of miracles as a condition of faith; Christ demanded faith as a condition of miracles, and on that issue His own unhappy town was the first to reject Him. But even

had He granted a sign to that perverse people would their faith have become perfect? Alas! no. Look at Capharnaum. Its faith, founded on material signs and wonders, was itself material and unenduring. I see the Christ, on His last journey to Jerusalem and death, turn like an avenging angel to Capharnaum and pronounce a woe upon it. "Woe to thee, Capharnaum." You believe, yes, but your faith began not as true faith should, in submission of will and mind and heart, to My words. If in pagan Tyre and Sidon had been wrought such mighty works, they had long since done penance in sackcloth and ashes. But thou, Capharnaum, art exalted unto heaven with worldly pride and local vanity. Your faith was born of material signs and wonders, and without them it cannot endure; whence you shall be cast down again into the hell of unbelief. Ah, how true a prophecy was that! When Christ multiplied before their eyes the loaves and fishes they would fain have taken Him by force and made Him king; but when Christ ceased His miracles, when He had utterly surrendered Himself into the hands of His enemies, when Pilate brought Him forth scourged and thorn-crowned and said: "Behold the man, behold your King," many a Capharnaum tongue shouted back: "Away with Him; we have no king but Cæsar."

Brethren, it is a fearful thought for us Christians and Catholics that from Jerusalem to Capharnaum the only persons who turned with perfect faith to Christ were a heathen, outside the circle of God's

chosen people, a poor old woman, and an heretical community. When Jesus went from Nazareth to Capharnaum, He, after two days, went south to Jerusalem to the feast of Passover. In Jerusalem his miracles and words aroused but opposition and unbelief. Returning into Galilee He passed through Samaria, whose people the supercilious Jews regarded as heretics and little less than heathens. Yet there Christ found the faith He sought. The poor woman at Jacob's well, all sinful as she was, quickly perceived His Messiasship and blazed it abroad, and though He remained there but two days and performed not a single miracle, yet the citizens believed in Him, "not for the word of the woman but because of His own word." "Because," said they "we ourselves have heard Him and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world." What a disappointment, then, on His arrival at Cana, as to-day's Gospel relates, to find a man from Capharnaum, a Jew, petitioning for the life of his son, but unwilling to believe until he had seen signs and wonders! What a disappointment again when Jairus, also a Jew, asked Him to raise up his dying or dead daughter, but despaired even while the Saviour was on the way to do so, and probably joined with those who on Christ's arrival laughed Him to scorn! But presently came the poor old woman, who believed first, and, believing, touched the hem of His garment and was healed of her issue of blood. Presently also came the heathen centurion, that bluff, large-hearted soldier, petitioning for the life of his servant, believ-

ing implicitly in the omnipotence and Messiasship of Jesus and deeming himself unworthy that the Lord should enter under his roof. Humanly speaking, what a glad surprise for Christ to find in these strangers the genuine faith He so vainly sought even in Israel! For all time He has made their blind, unquestioning assent the model for doubting seekers of signs and wonders. "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed. For many such shall come from the east and the west and shall sit down in the kingdom of the Father, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out." Brethren, you will doubtless say to me: "This is a harsh doctrine, offensive to Catholic ears. It is destructive of old and popular ideas, rather than constructive of new. It were better left unsaid." Brethren, apart from the fact that it is the true teaching of Christ, it also, to my mind, serves a double purpose. It throws a flood of light on certain obscure passages of the Gospel narrative, and imparts practical advice for our guidance. Have you ever reflected why Christ so often enjoined secrecy regarding His miracles on the spectators and those who were cured? The explanation offered by some, viz., that it was lest His whereabouts should become known to His enemies seems almost blasphemous. No; the real reason was lest men should be tempted to base their belief in Him on His works rather than His words, thereby conceiving imperfect and unenduring faith. Had all men minds and hearts as docile and tenacious as the Virgin Mary's, miracles would be things unknown.

"Woman," He says to her at Cana, "Woman, what is there between Me, the miracle-worker, and thee?" Yet when she pointed to the bystanders unconscious of His divinity and bade them do His bidding, He, for their sake, not hers, changed the water into wine. Not once thereafter was she present at a miracle; not once did He appear to her after the Resurrection. Why? Because she needed it not; her faith was perfect. Again, did you ever reflect why Christ's humanity is always brought out in the strongest, most human, aspect on the occasion of His greatest miracles? The star shines and the angels visibly and audibly hover over Bethlehem, but within is a helpless, poverty-stricken child. Angels guard Him, and yet He flees for His life into Egypt. He astonishes the doctors in the Temple, yet He goes down to Nazareth with the carpenter and his wife and is subject to them. The Father proclaims "Thou art My beloved Son" over a village stripling seeking the baptism of John. He is tempted by Satan, and angels minister to Him. Now He is asleep for very weariness and yet He stills the storm at sea; now He is hungry but marvellously feeds five thousand; now He ministers as a slave and institutes the Holy Eucharist. Again, His enemies fall before Him, but lead Him away captive. Again, Nature trembles and the dead rise at His cry, but He dies of pain and thirst on the cross. Ah, how careful He was never to do violence to man's freedom! How quick always, and especially in the moments of greatest exaltation, to present some phase of His personality

that would tax the popular credulity and elicit those acts of absolute submission that constitute perfect faith.

Brethren, there is here, too, something for our guidance. Modern miracles, are they true or false? I know not, neither do I care. The age of miracles, has it ceased? Practically it has. Is this a misfortune or a blessing? A blessing, for it argues on the part of the men of to-day a deeper mental insight into the nature of Christ and His institutions, and a more docile heart to receive His teaching. Brethren, what shall I say to you? Be not over-anxious for material miracles nor over-credulous regarding them to the detriment of your faith. There are, thank God, invisible miracles—invisible, yet very real—happening around and in us every day. There is the cleansing of sin from the soul by the waters of Baptism; there is the cure of spiritual lepers by the words of absolution; there is the changing of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. These and such like are the real miracles of to-day. Believe in them, pray for them, love them, and make them the basis of your faith. They are the only miracles you can build your faith on and still deserve Christ's commendatory words: "Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed."

Twenty-first Sunday After Pentecost.

MERCY.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."—Matt. vi. 12.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Shakespeare. II. Mercy should beget mercy. III. Beatitude.

I. History: 1. Peter's query. 2. Individual and priest. 3. Sinners God's debtors.

II. Rare virtue: 1. Measure for measure. 2. Mercy's eulogy. 3. Bearing wrongs patiently.

III. Judgment: 1. Parity. 2. Revival of guilt. 3. Foolish merchant.

Per.: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

SERMON.

BRIEFLY stated, dear Brethren, that is the subject of to-day's Gospel. It teaches that divine clemency and human gratitude should join in indissoluble wedlock, and bring into this world the lovely virtues of mercy and charity. Shakespeare compares mercy to the "gentle rain from heaven," that gentle downpour that renews the face of the earth—that steals through all earth's devious windings back to the ocean, and thence back to the skies whence it came. So, too, divine mercy if it beget not in us love and mercy one for another—that mercy "that reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly;" if it be not exhaled and returned whence it came, by grateful hearts, the heavens become as unyielding as polished metal, and God's earthly kingdom an arid waste. For,

blessed are the merciful, and only the merciful, for they alone shall obtain mercy.

The Gospel parable is Our Lord's answer to Peter, who had just asked: "Lord, how often shall I forgive my brother his offences against me? Seven times?" Our Lord answered: "I say to thee not seven times, but seventy times seven times." We read that the just man falls seven times a day; if you remember, there are seven deadly sins; and seven out of the ten commandments treat of man's duty to man; and for one or all of these reasons Peter saw fit to make seven pardons the limit of forbearance. But Our Lord had previously said: "Be ye merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful," and as the mercy of God is infinite, therefore He now teaches Peter, and through Peter He teaches us, to know in pardoning neither measure nor number. This lesson, I repeat, is meant for us, for Our Lord speaks not to Peter the priest, but to Peter the man; He defines Peter's duty not as the minister of the Sacrament of Penance, but as the Christian in the ups and downs of daily life. For, in his question, Peter had spoken of offences against himself; whereas, the priest in the confessional deals with offences against God; and Our Lord, in His answer, inculcates unconditional forgiveness, which, for the priest in the confessional, is oftentimes impossible. To the individual, to each individual Christian, is directed this precept of love and forgiveness.

Christ having answered Peter proceeds, accord-

ing to the custom of those days, to explain His meaning by a parable. "The kingdom of heaven," He says, "is likened to a king who would take an account of his servants." God is our King and we His earthly kingdom, exiled, it is true, like the Israelites in the desert, but hoping like them to reach one day the promised land. An exiled nation we, homeward bound, some, loading ourselves with earthly spoils beneath which we fall and perish; and some trudging bravely on, indifferent to everything, to everything except the glory to come; each led on by the all-absorbing idea—our happiness. But even the worst among us pause betimes—our better moments—when the still, small voice of conscience speaks and we enter into reckoning with our God. And oh! how much we owed even had we never sinned! How immeasurably have our sins increased that debt! How small our funds wherewith to pay; and how hopeless the task of earning more! The servant, in the parable, owed his king ten thousand talents, that is, ten million dollars. If we suppose a million dollars to be the reward for keeping, and fine for breaking, one of God's commandments, many of us, alas! are hopelessly in debt, and many of us, thank God, are in a fair way to become multi-millionaires in the kingdom of heaven. But we sinners—those of us who have run our sinful course through the Decalogue, not once but hundreds of times—what an enormous debt is ours! Ah, we may pray: "Lord, have patience with me," but it would be folly to add: "and I will pay Thee all." We have not,

we never can have, wherewith to pay the debt incurred by even one mortal sin, for what do we possess, what can we possess that is not from our bountiful Creditor? No, there is only one hope for us—the hope that our King and our God will be moved with compassion and forgive us all the debt, and the foundation for that hope we have in His own blessed promise: "That an humble and contrite heart the merciful Lord will never despise." But even our contrition and humility—our ransom—come from God. By a law of spiritual gravitation, of ourselves we can descend, but ascend, never, without the helping hand of God. If He turn not toward us we are lost. Dante represents the damned as submerged in a frozen lake—frozen because the light and warmth of God's gaze never penetrates there. The Lord looked on the traitor Peter, and immediately Peter wept. So it ever is: even the beginning of our repentance comes from God. He may look on us reproachfully, He may even command to be sold into the slavery of the devil our soul, and our soul's wife, which is our body, and the children of their union, which are our evil deeds, but His very wrath is an artifice of divine mercy to lead us to fall down at His feet and beseech Him saying: "Have patience with me and I will pay Thee all." Nay, He even puts it in our power to pay Him all, having given us an elder Brother, our Redeemer, possessed of countless riches amassed for just such emergencies, and ever generous in paying the debts of His scapegrace younger brethren. Be our debt

ever so great—infinite if you will—yet as long as life lasts there is room for hope. By mortal sin we justly fall under the slavery of the devil, but not irredeemably. It is never too late to appeal to divine mercy to have patience; the case is never so hopeless but what, relying on the infinite merits of Our Redeemer, we can confidently promise God's justice to pay Him all. One thing, and one only, is necessary; that, as we fell by pride so we rise by humbly falling, supplicants, at God's feet, for: "He that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." "Mercy," says the poet, "is an attribute of God Himself," most difficult for man to imitate, and hence most often emphasized in God's dealings with man. Says the Psalmist: "If Thou wilt observe iniquities, O Lord, Lord, who will endure them?" Now do we, as creatures, properly reflect this attribute of the Creator? Alas! what a rare virtue among us is magnanimity. For lack of mercy in our hearts, too often the very recitation of the Lord's Prayer becomes a curse on our heads. We beg and receive forgiveness from our King, and going out we harden our hearts against the prayer of our fellow-servant and refuse to forgive. We ask for pardon in proportion as we are willing to pardon, and were God to take us at our word, were He to interpret our prayer as it is interpreted in our daily lives, forgiveness of injuries were as rare in heaven as it is on earth. But if during our lives

God's mercy surpasseth all understanding, be assured, the day will come—the day of our death—when He will make our mercy the measure of His own. "For," says St. Luke, "with the same measure that you shall mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

Nothing, to my mind, brings out into stronger light the vileness of our nature than our lack of appreciation for this lovely virtue, for mercy for her own sweet sake is worthy of all love. Among virtues she is the highest in the highest. The Church, in one of her prayers, says: "The omnipotence of God is shown especially by mercy and pardon." Speaking of mercy of man to man Shakespeare says: "It becomes the throned monarch better than his crown, for earthly power doth then show likest God's, when mercy seasons justice." Mercy it is that constitutes us children of the Most High, for in Matt. (v. 45, 46) we read: "Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." Our powers of forgiveness are the measure of our loyalty to Our Saviour, for to forgive means to overcome self, and Christ has said: "If any man will be My disciple let him deny himself." In fact, chief among the objects of Christ's coming was to teach mercy to every living creature. He came to level the opposing fortifications of God's justice and man's arrogance, and though as to the former He succeeded, as to the latter, alas! His mission was partly a failure. For with all the ingratitude of the servant in the parable,

we ignore the fundamental principle of all Christian morality, "Do to others as you would like to be done by;" we refuse to see that the divine remission of our vast liabilities generates in us an obligation to forgive our fellowman his paltry debts. No, we throttle him, and cast him into prison, till he pay us all. "Mercy," says Shakespeare, "blesseth him that gives and him that takes," and, per contra, vengeance curseth equally its victim and its author. A man never appears to worse advantage—never more contemptible than when he clamors for revenge; whereas the sublimest heroism is patience under insult and wrong. The author of the book of Proverbs voices these sentiments when he says: "The bearing of a man is known by patience, and his glory is to pass over wrongs." Is an injury done or an affront offered; immediately the ignoble rowdy, with a shriek or an oath, rushes to the assault, but the gentleman stands unmoved or gives way, as the poet says, with nobler reason against fury taking part. The noble Christian looks over the present wrong, to a greater good beyond, to which wrongs, patiently borne, are stepping-stones; but the rowdy sees only the wrong here and now, and like a foolish child frets more bitterly over a broken toy than over the loss of his inheritance.

Such incidents are but modern reproductions of the scene on Calvary—the contrast between the mocking, blasphemous thief on his cross and the crucified Saviour—patient and silent—silent, or if He spake at all it was only to utter that gentle

prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The king, in the parable, having heard what was done, recalled his servant before him, and having upbraided him for his ingratitude, delivered him to the torturers till he should pay all the debt. There is the third and last act in this little drama presented for our instruction. We may be inclined, perhaps, to console our guilty consciences by arguing that there is no parity between the action of the king to his servant and the attitude of God to the sinner, for in Ezechiel we read that as often as the sinner shall bewail his iniquities God shall no longer remember them. True, but still I call your attention to the closing words of the parable: "So, also, shall My heavenly Father do to you if you forgive not every one your brother from your heart." The parity is plain—plainly stated in the sermon on the mount: "If you forgive others your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you forgive not others neither will your heavenly Father forgive you." Nay, just as in the parable, judgment is now demanded for a debt already pardoned, so our subsequent sin revives the guilt and justifies the punishment even of those previously pardoned. A schoolboy, for example, misbehaves and is forgiven; he offends again and is pardoned with a warning, and so on till patience ceases to be a virtue, and his master inflicts punishment, not for one but for the whole series of offences. And by the fact that the ungrateful servant did not dare, a second time, to plead for pardon, we are taught that

the course of a relapsing sinner leads to final impenitence. A merchant had four ships, three so new and splendid that, not to mar their beauty, he went with all his merchandise on board the fourth that was old. But one ship cannot float the cargo of four, and so the old ship sank, and its owner with it, and now his three beautiful vessels are to him profitless things of the past. Brethren, we have four ages—childhood, youth, manhood, and old age—and if we load the entire burden of penance on old age, be sure we will fare no better than the foolish merchant. "Now," says the Scripture, "now is the acceptable time—now is the day of salvation."

Brethren, at times—in our better moments—we realize our debt of gratitude to God and we cast around for ways of paying it saying: "What shall I give to the Lord for all He hath given me?" Let me send you away this morning with this one idea fixed firmly in your minds, that your first, most sacred duty is to be kind and gentle with one another as your heavenly Father is merciful to you. How rare soever be the gift you propose to lay at the feet of the Saviour, remember always that rarer still is a merciful, a forgiving heart. "If," says Our Lord, in Matt. v. 23, 24, "if thou offer thy gift at the altar and there thou rememberest that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave thou thy gift before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift."

Twenty-second Sunday After Pentecost.

Church and State.

"Render, therefore, to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."—Matt. xxii. 21.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Religion and patriotism. II. Conflict. III. History of question.
I. Church superior to State: 1. Origin. 2. Nature. 3. Mission and destiny.
II. History: 1. Church's work. 2. State's opposition. 3. Europe of to-day.
III. Church in America: 1. Her enemies. 2. Her work. 3. Solution of problems.
Per.: Fidelity to Church, and golden rule in time of conflict.

SERMON.

Brethren, love of religion and love of country are two of the master passions of every Christian, every Catholic heart. And because master passions, therefore, by no other cause is the human breast so painfully convulsed as by a conflict between Church and State, by the conflicting emotions of patriotism and religious fidelity. In such a crisis, when called upon to choose between Church and State, between Christ and Barabbas, too often, alas! the world has answered, Barabbas. Thus when Pilate, presenting Jesus to the Jews, said: "Behold your King," they roared back: "Away with Him, we have no king but Cæsar." Again, all through the history of the Middle Ages runs the echo of a struggle to haul down the sacred emblem of Christianity—the cross—and hoist in its stead the symbol of civil authority—the flag. And even in our own times and in our

own country, Democracy, like a modern Nabuchodonosor, erects a statue to reason and liberty, and calls on all, at the sound of the national anthem, to fall down and adore. In view of such a crisis, therefore, it may not be amiss to consider briefly why we should give not only to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but especially to God and God's Church the things that are God's.

Man being composed of body and soul, living in time and destined for eternity, has many spiritual and corporal necessities; and among others the need of spiritual and temporal rulers. God, therefore, has established a twofold authority—the Church and the State—and given to each the right to claim our subjection and support. But the Church's claim to our allegiance is prior to that of the State. Each, it is true, derives its authority from God, but in the State authority comes from God through the people to the government; but in the Church it comes to her government directly from God. The State is founded by and for its people, but the Church, though for the people, has for its Founder God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. The State is a human institution, subject to the human conditions of change and decay, according to the vicissitudes of time and will of its people; but the Church is a divine institution, as unchangeable and everlasting here and hereafter as God Himself. Of the two, therefore, the Church stands nearer to God, and, as such, is the higher power. And as the moon reflects more of the sun's glory than the tiny star, such, too, is the relation—

the semblance of the constitutions of the Church and State to the perfect constitution of God's heavenly kingdom. The Church is the most perfect society extant. Her authority emanates from one invisible through one visible head, pervading her entire system, down to the very lowliest official in the service, and binding her many and varied members into a very marvel of unity. And a unity not of bodies alone, such as the State can boast—bodies held together by moral or even physical force and aiming at social order and temporal prosperity—but a unity of souls, and hence of bodies too, whose object is man's spiritual welfare, whose methods are to convince with truth and persuade by love, and whose high destiny it is to bring man into the everlasting possession of the all-good —of God Himself. By reason, therefore, of her divine origin, mission, and ultimate destiny, the Church is as far above the State as God above man, as the soul above the body, as heaven above earth; and as such, while teaching us to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, she justly claims that in a conflict of rights our first duty is to give to God and God's Church the things that are God's.

But in this utilitarian age we are apt to reckon claims to our allegiance according to the benefits we receive from the claimant. What, then, has the Church done for mankind, and what the State? Nineteen hundred years ago each started on its beneficent mission. The State being a creation of the people, backed up by the support of the majority,

with an end in view which all could understand and appreciate, its success was assured from the beginning. But in her very beginning the Church was handicapped. A few miserable, unlettered fishermen confronting a world of Pagan idolaters and fanatical Jews, preaching them a gospel antagonistic to their inclinations and prejudices; commanding the former to abandon their idols, and the latter to renounce their ancient traditions; preaching peace and good will to savage warriors; supplanting Venus with Mary, and Bacchus with a figure of temperance and mortification; commanding assent to doctrines they themselves did not even pretend to understand, and when asked: "Whence your authority?" they answered: "The village carpenter of Nazareth." "Whom shall we adore?" "Yonder felon on the cross." "What shall we hope for, what shall we fear?" "A heaven and a hell whose existence we cannot even prove." What wonder King Agrippa laughed at St. Paul and told him to "go to, for a learned madman." But madness though it were, still there was method in it, for this doctrine and the Church that preached it spread everywhere, invaded every country, and, in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, everywhere overcame. And wherever the Church went, there immediately began to be felt the humanizing effects of Christianity. Liberty, equality, and fraternity was her motto. Liberty for the wife and mother from the thraldom of her lord; liberty for the slave from the yoke of his master; liberty for the sinner from the dominion of

the devil. Equality, too, established not by debasing all to an equal grade of servility, but by raising each to a sense of his dignity as a child of God and heir to heaven. Fraternity also, whereby the rich are bound to assist the poor, the victor to spare the vanquished, and peace is established and maintained between people and people and between man and man. And in the accomplishment of this social revolution the Church has never shed a drop of blood nor struck a single blow. With the book of science in one hand she has—even in the ages when learning was a reproach—she has gone through the world educating mankind up to an appreciation of the truth, and with the crucifix in the other hand she has presented to them the motive for conforming their lives to the lessons received. And in all that time she has never trespassed on the rights of king or people; in fulfilling her mission she has helped the civil authorities to accomplish theirs; and when persecuted by jealous rulers she has, in the interests of peace, retreated to the last limits of truth and justice before pronouncing her ultimatum: "Thus far and no farther shalt thou come." For just as her divine Founder by His very goodness excited the jealous hatred of the Cæsars, and was consequently scourged and crucified, so too the Church. The State has tripped her up at every turn; dashed from her hand the wine and oil she would have poured into the wounds of suffering humanity. It forbade her first ministers, the Apostles, to preach the Gospel or name of Jesus Christ, and it arrested and executed them as rebels

because they refused to rebel against God. The mighty army of Christian, of Catholic martyrs it ruthlessly slaughtered, because, rather than prove disloyal to their great commander-in-chief, Jesus Christ, they preferred to disobey His subordinate officer, the State. Brave youth and gentle virgin, priest and nun and aged martyr, let the godless and uncatholic call you traitors and rebels if they will, but we venerate you as the heroes of the world, and yearn to follow your glorious example. But who shall relate all the Church suffered from the State! Let the hills and caves of Ireland and the catacombs of Rome tell the story of her sufferings and her wrongs. While prating about liberty, the State refused liberty of conscience to the Catholic. Incapable itself of exercising spiritual authority, it forbade its exercise by the Church. Nay, while denying to the Church, which is at once human and divine, the least civil power, the State—which is purely human—dares to usurp spiritual authority by establishing national churches. Are not King Edward VII. and the Czar of Russia two worthy claimants to the honor of being successor to St. Peter? But apart from that, on the continent of Europe, in essentially Catholic countries, the Pope to-day cannot appoint a bishop without permission of the State; no marriage is valid except contracted before a magistrate; and only lately the Italian and French parliaments made it a criminal offence for any priest in the confessional or from the altar to object to any government ordinance, however unjust or unholy. One hundred and

seventy times has the State wrung from the Church her little temporal dominion necessary for the right exercise of her spiritual authority. Forty-five Popes have been either driven out or kept out of Rome. Hildebrand and the three Popes, Pius VI., VII., and IX., languished for years in exile; and behold our own Leo of to-day robbed of his states and city, a prisoner in his last and only possession, his house; his priests and churches despoiled, his monasteries thrown down and their inmates cast out into the world, nay, his very life in danger—and all this from a beggarly government that has beggared itself in paying its minions for crying "Down with Catholicity! Death to the Pope!" There is the past record of Church and State—the Church, the highest power on earth; the State, which is but her lowly auxiliary. The Church, next to God, mankind's greatest friend; the State a perpetual dog in the manger, frustrating duties it was itself incapable of. The State claiming all for Cæsar; but the Church mildly but firmly proclaiming the law of equity: "Thou shalt render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God and God's Church the things that are God's."

Brethren, the question comes home very close to us. If a member of the A.P.A., or one of our music-hall brethren, were asked America's greatest enemy to-day, he would answer: "The Catholic Church." And you know, if a fool only repeats his folly long enough and loud enough, wiseacres will begin to believe him. Well, then, where did the Catholic Church ever teach to give to God the things that

are God's without also teaching to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's? Only the other day her highest prelate, speaking to the Catholics of America, defined her policy thus: "Go forward bearing in one hand the book of Christian truth and in the other the American Constitution." I venture to say that in working out the social problems that confront them, the real statesmen and true patriots of the country look to the Catholic Church as their ablest assistant. And well they may; and the Church, given fair play and no favor, is right ready to assist, for on America she looks as a mother on her young and beautiful daughter. I repeat it, America is a product of Catholicity. Her government is the most perfect among nations, because it most nearly resembles that of the Church. The Declaration of Independence is a declaration of Catholic principles as old as the Church, and the framers of our Constitution were guided by the Catholic theory of government—liberty, equality, and fraternity—borne to them like an echo from the times of their Catholic ancestors. The State without the Church can never handle the poor. "Father," says the poor old widow, "Father, I am destitute, send me to the Sisters' home; but sooner than go to the Island I will die in the street." The State alone can never subdue the lawless. Two or three policemen vainly struggle with a madman; but the priest comes along and immediately fury gives place to submission and repentance. The State locks up criminals and makes them more rebellious still, but the Church enlightens them with truth and

softens them with love and restores them to society good citizens. Here are the things of Cæsar and of God, of Church and State; and the mistakes of the State are as many as the times she refused God's Church the things that are hers. The Church had, in the Old World, proved her ability to abolish slavery without a blow, but the State robbed her of that privilege here, with a consequent sacrifice of innumerable lives. The State is vainly grappling with Socialism, a monster the Church kept at bay eighteen hundred years by laws of charity and conscience and the doctrine of a hereafter. The country is crying out against lynch law, and the State is powerless to prevent it; but when the Church was given the things that are hers, the shivering victim found a safe refuge in the sanctuary. A dangerous spirit of materialism is taking possession of the young, because in educating them the rights of the Church are usurped by the State. And finally, the marriage contract, the foundation of the home and consequently the cornerstone of society—marriage is being taken from the Church and lowered by the State from the dignity of a sacrament to the baseness of a bargain, while divorce is filling the country with ruined homes, a degraded womanhood, and an immoral society. The Church is the only body to-day that takes a determined stand against these evils. She is as ready to shed her blood now for her rights and God's as were her brave sons in the hour of the nation's need. With the gentle devotedness of her consecrated daughters on the battlefield and in the hospital, she

nurses society back to moral strength and vigor. All she asks is fair play. "Give," she says, "to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God and God's Church the things that are God's."

Brethren, in America, thank God, one can be at once a good Catholic and a good citizen; and the better the Catholic the better the citizen. But many of us are intensely interested in politics and little concerned about religion. We look on State laws as grave precepts, on Church laws as pious counsels. We would give our lives for the nation's honor, but we laugh when our Church is insulted and wronged. We proudly march through the world wrapped in the American flag, but we blush when caught signing ourselves with the sign of the cross. And yet, by reason of her origin, constitution, mission, destiny, and services to mankind, the Church's claim to our allegiance is prior to that of the State. In times of peace, therefore, let Catholicity and patriotism go hand in hand; but in times of conflict let us avoid equally the extremes of giving all to the Church or all to the State, and let us be guided by the golden rule: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Twenty-third Sunday After Pentecost.

The Vice of Drunkenness.

"For many walk of whom I have told you often, and tell you weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame."—Phil. iii. 18, 19.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Wisdom and drunkenness. II. Drunkard among creatures. III. Bacchus.
I. Objections: 1. Timidity. 2. Liberty. 3. Necessity.
II. Drink affects: 1. Pocket. 2. Self and family. 3. Neighbors.
III. Appeal to: 1. Total abstainers. 2. Moderate drinkers. 3. Drunkards.
Per.: Woman's help, and tableau for young men.

SERMON.

"Brethren, be wise unto sobriety." These words, my dear Brethren, taken from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, express the relation between common sense and drunkenness, between a drunkard and a wise man. They tell us that on the steep incline of human perfection and human degeneration wisdom is the highest point, drunkenness the very lowest, as far removed the one from the other as is the brute creation from man, as is the basest vice from the noblest virtue, as is hell from heaven itself. So that the more one approaches to perfect sobriety the wiser he becomes, the nearer he comes to habitual drunkenness the greater his folly. For what position in God's fair creation does the drunkard hold? An angel is a pure creature that enjoys God; a man is a creature that thinks and rea-

sons; a brute is a creature that follows his appetites, but never to excess; a tree is an ornament of the earth and useful to man; but the drunkard, what is he? The drunkard is only a drunkard, with nothing like him in all God's creation. He is not preparing himself for the angels' heaven; instead of reasoning like a man he has buried his rational soul in his flesh, and his very flesh he has sunk lower than the brutes, so as to become a useless, unsightly, dangerous monster. Hence it is that some one has very well said that mankind may be divided into three classes: men, women, and beasts. This accounts, too, for the strange pictures of the wine-god, Bacchus, which the genius of ancient Greece and Rome has handed down to us. They represent him as an unhealthy-looking, bloated youth, bearing aloft the wine-goblet, seated on a car drawn by wild beasts, while round about him frantic men and lewd women and monstrous satyrs wrestle and sing and caper in shameful abandon. Oh, those ancient poets well knew that sobriety is wisdom, and the companions of drunkenness, vice, and every kind of folly. This same idea which they tried to picture a later poet attempted to express when he exclaimed: "Oh, thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no other name by which thou mayest be known let us call thee Devil."

Brethren, you will tell me that all this, instead of being a sound argument for total abstinence, is mere high-sounding exaggeration. Is not, you ask, the moderate drinker who never goes to excess a

better type of Christian than the timid teetotaler who does not dare touch liquor lest he become a hopeless drunkard? Certainly the jolly bather who rushes right in and swims away out and confidently dives and floats is more admired than the other who does not dare try it. Yes, but of the two he that is ashore is the safer; the other may get beyond his depth and weaken and sink in a moment before a helping hand can reach him; or his example may entice out others less strong and less experienced than himself, so that he becomes responsible both for their loss and his own. Remember he that loveth danger shall perish in it. No one claims total abstinence is a great virtue—no, it is an absolute necessity for some, a wise precaution for others, a good work for all. Still it is false to say that it is inferior to temperance, for the temperate man likes a drink and takes it; the total abstainer likes a drink and does not take it, and Christ decides which is the better: "If thou wilt be My disciple, deny thyself." Well, but you say, I am a free man and to pledge anything that interferes with my taking a drink destroys my liberty. Friend, never take the pledge against your will, but only freely, either for the good of yourself or neighbor or for the greater glory of God. Yet the law vaccinates men against smallpox, restrains criminals from blowing themselves up, and keeps madmen from jumping off the Brooklyn Bridge; and does it destroy their liberty? Then why not restrain the drunkard who is all at once infected with contagious disease, is a criminal and a madman? The

voice of the people is the voice of God proclaiming the good of the community to be the highest law, and hence the individual's liberty ends where the rights of others begin. Oh, well, you say, drink is necessary for me. As a medicine sometimes, but as food and drink never. Alcohol is not a food, but a part of all food, just as hydrogen, though a part of water, is a useless substitute for water. The health of total abstainers proves that alcohol as such is not necessary; those shattered wrecks of humanity, drunkards, prove it is a positive injury, and chemists tell us that in a quart of alcohol there is not enough food to support a canary twenty-four hours. Truly does the Scripture say: "Wine is a mere luxury," etc. Alcohol, then, is neither necessary nor useful as a food, but a mere luxury most ruinous in its effects. Now, what are these effects? First, it affects the drunkard himself—his purse. Our people, God help them, earn their money harder than any other people under heaven, and yet, alas! they spend it more freely and more foolishly. The ancient Spartans spent a certain amount in making their helots or slaves drunk, that their children from seeing them might learn to be thrifty and sober. Alas, history repeats itself in our days, for the English-speaking race have become the helots of the world. They may boast of having girdled the world from pole to pole with a zone of Catholicity, but it is true also they have girdled it from east to west with a zone of drunkenness. And drink costs money. You who spend ten cents a day for liquor, ask your ill-fed, scantily

dressed child and it will tell you that it amounts to $3 a month, almost $40 a year; $400 in ten years; $800 in twenty years. Or if you spend a quarter a day, that is $7 a month; $90 a year; $900 in ten years; $1800 in twenty. And all for what? You have heard tell of the man who invested his fortune in fireworks and fired it all off in the air. Well, the drunkard is still more foolish, since he fires the rockets down his own throat. Again, drink undermines his constitution and shatters his nervous system, so that he becomes a blear-eyed, haggard, slovenly wreck. Then by and by comes that horror of horrors—delirium tremens. God bless and save us, friends, that is a thing too terrible even to talk about. But what is the spiritual state of such a one? A soul fetid with innumerable sins of drunkenness and impurity, and without the remedies of sins—without prayer, without a Church, without a God. It was well said that "for the drunkard the grave doth gape thrice wider than for other men." But more terrible are the words of Isaias: "Woe to the drunkard, for hell hath enlarged its soul and opened wide its mouth to receive him."

Secondly, drunkenness affects the drunkard's family. As well might I attempt to enumerate every moan and sigh of the winter wind, and every drop of rain that falls from heaven, as tell you of all the moans and sighs and tears of the drunkard's heart-broken mother, wife, and children. See for yourself; it is under your very eyes. Ask the careworn, sickly child why he cries and he will answer: "Father is

drinking again." Go to the wretched hovel he calls a home and ask his wife has she a husband and she will tell you she has two—saving your presence—"One (my man when sober) is real good and kind; the other (my man when drinking) is a perfect brute." And if you care to stay around until the drunken husband comes home—oh! if you have tears to shed prepare to shed them then. For then the vitriol madness mounts to the ruffian's brain, and the filthy bylane rings with the yell of his trampled wife. And so they go on year in and year out, till even the poor wife in sheer despair takes to drink too. And so they live drunken lives and die drunken deaths, and leave a family with the hereditary taint—heirs to nothing but the besetting sin of their parents.

Lastly, drink affects the drunkard's neighbors. Oh, Bacchus the wine-god does not go unattended, but leads in his train a debauched company as mad and debauched as himself. And neither does the drunkard go down his dishonored way to a more dishonored grave single-handed and alone. When he drinks he drinks in company, and when he spends his children's money he helps to spend the money of other men's children, and the moan of his heart-broken wife finds an echo in many a miserable home. I make it a rule, the drunkard says, always to treat when I meet another man; and when I am alone and take one glass I feel like another man and so I treat myself to a second and so on. Go to the asylums and prisons, and many of the wretched inmates will tell you they are there through drunkenness whose first

cause was a drunkard's example. Read the records of the fearful sacrifice of human life in shipwrecks, collisions, fires, and explosions, and you will find that drink was at the bottom of most of them. From the same prolific source flow murders, suicides, and a thousand nameless sins. Alas, have not I seen it all in my own school companions, the dearest friends of my school days! There was one drunkard among them, who after five years at a university has opened a saloon. Of his companions one was tried for his life for malpractice and murder, another is serving a term for forgery, and a third ended his drunken career in a ditch. Truly is drink the ruin of youth, the scourge of manhood, and the dishonor of old age—the devil's way to man and man's way to the devil.

Brethren, in God's name try to avoid this shocking vice. If you are a total abstainer, not from necessity but through choice, continue to persevere, and be sure you are doing a good work for God, your neighbor, and yourself. If you are a moderate drinker, oh beware, beware, for the one cause of drunkenness is drinking, and "he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little." The drink-habit partakes of the nature of a snake and of a tiger. It may steal on you silently and slowly wind itself around you and crush you in its embrace; or in the day of trouble or sorrow or mental anxiety it may come upon you at a single bound and destroy you in an instant. But if you are a habitual drunkard, oh for the love of God and your own soul abandon your sinful folly while there is yet time. And you,

mothers, and wives, and sisters, you can do much by making the home pleasant and attractive that the men may find there a lawful substitute for the unlawful pleasures they seek elsewhere. And you, young men, picture to yourselves and keep ever before your minds that beautiful tableau of a young man surrounded and conversing with religion, sobriety, and chastity, while irreligion, drunkenness, and impurity fly baffled from the scene. Let that be your ideal, to sit self-controlled in the fiery prime of youth, obedient at the feet of law. If you keep that ideal in mind and let it reflect on your life, I promise you you will not only be more healthy, you will not only be more wealthy, but, most of all, you will deservedly be numbered among the truly wise. Then will you follow in the steps of our divine Master and Model, and you will advance with Jesus in wisdom and age and grace with God and men.

Twenty-fourth Sunday After Pentecost.

JUDGMENT.

"There shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world, neither shall be."—Matt. xxiv. 21.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. Protestants as to fear of God. II. Worthy motive. III. Church's liturgy.
I. Last day: 1. Sudden, certain, uncertain. 2. Great day. 3. Day of the Lord.
II. Commotion: 1. In earth and heaven. 2. In souls of men. 3. The resurrection.
III. Judgment: 1. Trembling criminal. 2. Rendering of verdict. 3. Sentence and execution.
Per.: 1. Faithful servant. 2. Parable of fig-tree. 3. Holy indifference and fear.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, Catholic pulpits excepted, the preaching of the fear of the Lord has become a thing of the past. It is a harsh subject, equally offensive to the refined and the sinful, and besides, say the reformers and the reformed, it makes of sinners hypocrites still more displeasing to God. Yet Holy Writ has it that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, that it drives sin from the soul, and that without it no one can be sanctified. St. Augustine compares fear of God and the grace of God to a needle and thread, it being utterly impossible for God's grace to enter the soul unless the fear of the Lord precede. No vice was more roundly rated by Christ than hypocrisy; yet He frequently pointed to death and judgment and hell as objects of dread, and He bade

us fear, not so much him who kills the body, but rather him who after he hath killed the body can destroy both soul and body unto hell. The greatest saints, SS. Ambrose, Basil, Jerome, etc., felt, confessed, and taught the fear of the Lord, and St. Augustine, while assigning it as the cause of his own conversion, declares it to be the climax of every call to repentance. This, no doubt, is why the Church in her liturgy so often addresses herself to our sense of fear, as, for instance, on the first Monday in Lent, and again in the gospels of the cockle and good wheat, and the net cast into the sea, and especially on this, the last, and on next Sunday, the first, of the Ecclesiastical Year, in the awful pictures of the Last Judgment.

Brethren, the reasons are not far to seek why the gospel of the year's last Sunday should be the gospel of the last day, but it is not so clear why on the first Sunday of Advent the Church takes for her theme the terrors of judgment. Her object in placing in such close juxtaposition Christ's first and last coming is to remind us that, while contemplating God's infinite mercy in the person of the humble and pathetically helpless babe, we must not forget His equally infinite justice, to be revealed in the majestic coming of the Judge of the living and the dead. Moreover, the portentous events which shall presage the Lord's second coming were in a mystical sense realized at His birth. The Sun of Justice was darkened when the Word of God clothed Himself in human flesh, and the moon, God's kingdom on earth, His Church, which

shines with a borrowed light and has varied from the new to the full with the vicissitudes of time—the moon, alas! was at that moment small indeed, and shed abroad but little of that light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. Or perhaps it was Mary, fair as the moon, Queen of angels and of men, whose glory was on that night dimmed, an unhonored outcast, in the dark recesses of the stable. The stars fell from heaven: one to guide the Magi, and those others, brighter still, the angels, to lead the shepherds Bethlehemwards. The world of sinners, of which the sea is such a perfect figure, was agitated, for Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him, and there was distress of nations when the Holy Family fled in terror to Egypt, and the Magi returned in fear by another way, and the royal soldiers slew the Innocents. So striking, then, is the parallel between Christ's first and second coming that the Church considers the dread judgment, time's end, and the beginning of eternity, to be a salutary thought both for the closing and the opening of her year.

Brethren, the details of to-day's Gospel would seem as unreal and incredible as a horrible dream were it not that Christ has sworn that all these things shall come to pass, and that though heaven and earth shall pass away His word shall not go unfulfilled. That the day of doom will come, and come suddenly, is certain, for as lightning cometh out of the east and flasheth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. But beyond this, when it shall

come and with what results for us individually, all is uncertain, for these things are known to no man, neither Adventist nor so-called prophet, no, not even to the angels in heaven, but to the Father alone. This certain uncertainty it is which gives a peculiarly dreadful aspect to the other horrors of the last day. In the Acts of the Apostles we are told that when Paul the Apostle preached on judgment before Governor Felix, that Pagan's heart stood still in terror. Yet for a Christian how much more real and full of meaning is that awful subject. *Dies iræ, dies illa,* or as the Scriptures term it, the great day, the day of the Lord. A great day indeed, which shall sum up in itself the events, the effects, the reckonings of all previous days, and on which the storm-cloud of God's wrath, which through all time has been slowly gathering, shall burst upon the world. In a moment the world's motion, the rush of the heavenly bodies, and the bustle of human activity shall give way to eternal silence, as when the power is shut off in a mighty factory, and presently each of us shall depart for his allotted home forever and ever. *Dies magna,* yes, and day of the Lord too. All time may be said to consist of two days, man's day and God's. Through life we are free agents, able even to defy and outrage God, and God patiently bears it all, as though He heeded not or slept. But be assured His day is coming when His will alone shall prevail, and when past accounts shall be squared. Thus it happened to the Jews. They had their day when they stoned the prophets and persecuted and crucified the

Saviour, and except that Christ wept over Jerusalem because she had not known, and that in this, her day, what things were for her peace, God made no move, but bore with them. But His day came when the Romans came, and when the whole Jewish nation was given up to fire and sword and famine and pestilence and banishment and slavery. But even the horrors of Jerusalem's siege, though a figure, are but a faint reflection of the woes to come. That and such like calamities which the world has yet known were, says St. Clement, "but the skirmishes which precede the final and decisive conflict between the forces of guilt and retribution." O God! if a brush between the outposts be such, what shall be the horrors of the general engagement? Wisdom (v. 18) describes God as "putting on the armor of His zeal and wielding the sword of His wrath and shooting as missiles shafts of lightning and thick hail from the clouds, and inciting the winds and the seas to rage against and destroy His enemies." "That day," says the Prophet Sophronius, "is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds. I will distress men, and they shall walk like blind men, and their blood shall be poured out as earth and their bodies as dung. Neither shall their silver and gold be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord."

Brethren, though many descriptions of the last day are found in Scripture, the Lord's account is, naturally, unsurpassed. And verily, the subject, the death

of a world, was worthy of a God. Man is called a little world, and his death agony, the darkness which enshrouds his reason and senses and the commotion of the humors of his body, are a tiny picture of what shall take place in heaven and earth at the world's dissolution. The equilibrium of the universe demands that earth and heavenly bodies keep each its place and orbit, but when the sun is turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, and the stars have fallen, there will be nothing but ruin and confusion in heaven, on earth, and in the souls of men. Think of a shipwreck horror, the stricken vessel floundering through a raging sea, shaken and strained in every joint, amid darkness impenetrable, relieved, no, intensified, by the lightning's glare, and quivering with the thunder's crash, and on her decks a wailing company, waiting for death to come to them from the fire within her or from the storm without. An awful picture, but still nothing compared to the wreck of a world. I stood on Mount Vesuvius once and felt the earth quake beneath my feet and looked into the roaring, burning crater, but what was that to a shattered world with all its pent-up fires let loose? What a weird horror thrills us during an eclipse! But that is nothing. What a comfort a light and company are during a fierce midnight thunderstorm! Yet that is nothing. The burning of a city is nothing, nor the Johnstown disaster, nor the destruction of Galveston. Men can witness these and similar catastrophes and survive, but not so when the world falls, for, says the Gospel, "men shall then wither

away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world." But not all will suffer equally from fear, for the Gospel adds that when these things begin to come to pass, Christ will say to some: "Look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption is at hand." In Paul's description (Thess. iv. 15) of Gabriel's arrival and trumpet call to judgment, there is a tone of hope, of triumph almost, "for," he says, "the dead who are in Christ shall rise first, and then we who are alive shall be taken up with them to meet Christ, and so we shall be always with the Lord." Hope and despair, therefore, will be at the bottom of all the differences between the wicked and the just. For when at the trumpet's call, and under the shadows of darkness, the earth and seas shall have given up their dead, how eagerly will the souls of the blessed rush to embrace and inhabit and glorify those sweet companions of this earthly exile, their bodies, so long separated from them, but now to be reunited with them forever. Together they bore the burden of life's day, and conquered in life's battle, and well may the soul now cry: "Arise, sister, the winter is passed and the rain has gone; arise, my beloved, and come." Each being in perfect accord with the other, both may well exclaim with the Psalmist: "How good and sweet it is for brothers to dwell in unison." But alas! the case will not be such with all. With what reluctance and loathing will the lost soul join issues once again with its putrid body, what mutual recrimination, what agony! God's final act of mercy to the damned will

be to shroud those woeful reunions with that hour of densest darkness that will precede the dawn of eternity.

Brethren, then, in a burst of light, shall appear the Son of man with great power and majesty. "They shall go," says Isaias, "into the holes of rocks and into the caves of the earth from the face of the fear of the Lord and from the glory of His majesty," and St. John in the Apocalypse adds that the very "earth and heaven shall flee from His face." And if even the angels and the blessed shall tremble as they do who witness from the shore a storm at sea, what shall be the terror of the wicked! They shall look upon Him whom they crucified, and they shall wail and lament as do they who have lost an only-begotten son. They shall realize that for them the day of mercy has passed and the interminable night of justice begun. They shall feel that though the Old Law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth has been abolished in this world, it has never been abrogated in the next. But their penitential moans shall be all too late, for He shall separate them as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; the just He shall station on His right hand and the wicked on His left. Brethren, think of all the sad partings of friends and relatives by distance and by death that you have ever experienced or heard of, and let the bitterness of them be a salutary warning against that final separation. "And," says St. John (Apoc. xx. 12), "I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were spread,

and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works." All our good deeds and bad, weighty and trivial, aye, even every idle word, all our thoughts, words, deeds, and omissions, and the deeds of others in which we were either concerned or implicated—all are there recorded for or against us, and by them shall we be judged. And if the just man trembles for his fate and is barely saved, what shall we say of the sinner? Oh, woe to us if our one-time friend, but secret enemy, the devil, shall be able before the judgment-seat to turn the weight of evidence against us! Woe to us if it shall there appear that we deliberately replaced God's image in our soul with the brand of the beast! Woe to us if while the Saviour's promises failed to elicit our service, we yielded to the devil's empty blandishments! That awful sentence will then be ours: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Christ cursed the fig-tree, and it withered to the root—a figure of the blighting effect of that sentence on an immortal soul, for thenceforth the day of growth in virtue and of bearing fruits worthy of penance is closed forever. Nor will it avail us aught to call on the rocks and hills to fall upon and hide us, for the sentence once pronounced will be executed. "And," says St. John (Apoc. xviii. 21), "a mighty angel took up, as it were, a great millstone and cast it into the sea saying: With such violence as this shall Babylon be thrown down," and he continues (Apoc. xiv. 11), "the smoke of their torments shall

ascend up forever and ever, neither have they rest day or night."

Brethren, it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment, and no man living is sure that his particular and general judgments may not coincide. That day is coming, is coming now, and will arrive suddenly like a thief in the night. Men will be planning for the future, planning for honors, riches, and pleasures, and lo! the Lord will be even at their doors to demand their souls of them. Let us not be like them, but let us rather imitate that servant who when his lord came was found watching. From the color of the sky, men can foretell the weather of the morrow, and from the budding trees they know that summer is nigh. Let it not be said that the children of this age are wiser in their generation than the children of light, for we too from the lapse of time ought to learn every day that our judgment is drawing nearer and nearer. What we most need are holy indifference and holy fear: indifference to the things of earth and fear for the things beyond. Be not unduly concerned if your earthly state be not all that could be desired. Remember that men in this life are like the grains of winter wheat—the severer the winter the more abundant will be the next season's harvest. But it is criminal not to be solicitous for the world to come. Holy David feared to meet his God, and holy Job trembled for the time when God should rise against him in judgment, and Paul the Apostle, though conscious of no wrong, yet dared not account himself just.

And shall we, miserable sinners as we are, approach the dread tribunal without a qualm or tremor? Watch ye, therefore, for you know not the day nor the hour. Live well that you may die well, and dying well receive a favorable judgment. May our passage through life and death be such that those words of the divine Judge may be addressed to us: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Conclusion.

THE TRUE FAITH THE SECRET OF NATIONAL STABILITY.

"When the king heard of it, he was angry, and sending his army he destroyed those murderers and burned their city."—Matt. xxii. 7.

SYNOPSIS.

Ex.: I. History's repetitions. II. Past and future. III. God's agency.
I. Denial: 1. Call rejected. 2. Heir murdered. 3. Destruction prophesied.
II. Destruction: 1. Passover and siege. 2. Rome's victory. 3. Rome's downfall.
III. America: 1. Dewey's victory. 2. Our worldliness. 3. Religious decadence.
Per.: 1. Church in Rome and America. 2. Her unique work. 3. Catholicism, infidelity, ruin.

SERMON.

BRETHREN, to superficial minds it may seem a far cry from the king's rejected invitation to the refusal of so many to accept Christianity; from the destruction of Jerusalem to the fall of Pagan Rome; from the triumph of Vespasian and Titus to the Dewey cele-

bration; from the rejection of the Jews to the decay of modern nations; yet as surely as history repeats itself, so surely do these and similar great events echo and reëcho one another down the ages. To understand the present and the future's possibilities we must turn on them the search-light of the past. When the triumphant shouts have died away and the glittering pageants disappeared, it is well to recollect that the unseen hand of God runs through it all, reaching from end to end mightily and ordering all things sweetly. Our services at the shrine of patriotism should close with a recessional full of the thought of God. We should remember it was His hand gave nations victories in the past and afterwards crushed them for their infidelity. For infidel nations that trust in legion and armor-clad, with not a thought of God, are dust that build on dust. Amid our foolish boasts of power, therefore, we should pray the God of hosts to mercifully turn His face to us and ours to Him lest we forget, lest we forget.

"The king being angry, sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city." Brethren, the real King was God the Father, and the marriage He made for His Son was the union of the divine and human natures when the Word was made flesh. The invitation to the marriage, therefore, was the call to communion in the Christian Church either by faith in the future Messias, as in the Old Law, or by actual membership, as in the New. But God's messengers were coldly received. Though they came to their own—God's chosen people—

their own received them not. Though called and called again, men turned in preference to their farms and their merchandise. So little, indeed, could they brook interference with their worldly interests, that they laid violent hands on the prophets of old and Apostles and martyrs of later days, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. Aye, when God sent even His only Son, hoping they would revere and obey His commands, the world hung Him as a felon on the cross. Then it was that the anger of the King of kings burst forth. Mercy gave place to justice, and sending His army He destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Thirty-seven years after the Saviour's Ascension, the Roman legions under Vespasian and his son Titus invaded Palestine and besieged Jerusalem. Not only in the parable we have read, but in distinct prophetic words the Saviour had foretold it all—on that memorable day when standing on Olivet's slope, turning His streaming eyes to Jerusalem, He said: "The day shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round and straighten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." When the Apostles boastingly pointed out to Him the beauties of the Temple, He answered: "Amen, I say to you, there shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be destroyed." When on the march to Calvary the women of Jeru-

salem fain would have offered Him their sympathy, He replied: "Daughters, weep not for Me, but for yourselves and for your children."

Thus many times and often did Christ prophesy Jerusalem's impending doom. For well-nigh forty years God chose to bide His time, the city meanwhile ripening for His vengeance. The historian Josephus relates that fully three millions of Jews had come for the feast of the Passover and were housed within the city walls, when suddenly the Roman legions swooped down on them and surrounded them. For three whole years the war had lasted, the Roman objective point ever being Jerusalem. During the siege, battles were daily fought between the Jew and Roman without, and between Jew and Jew within. Internal dissensions, war, famine, and pestilence—a very avalanche of woes—fell on the fated city. The streets were blocked with dead and dying, while the living fought like dogs for the little food there was. Nay, horrible to relate, famished mothers even slew and ate their babes. Not more awful in their miserable destruction were Sodom and Gomorrha, and not less visible in Jerusalem's fall was the hand of an angry God. He had purposely fostered the power of Rome, Pagan though it was, to be the instrument of His vengeance, and when the Romans would have stayed their hand, He urged them on. For, when finally the city fell and the enemy rushed in with fire and sword, Titus, then in command,—Vespasian having gone to Rome to succeed the banished Nero,—Titus gave orders that the Jewish Temple should be

spared. But God had otherwise decreed, and a soldier, impelled, as he declared, by an irresistible impulse, applied a brand to the sacred edifice, and so literally was Christ's prophecy fulfilled that not a stone upon a stone was left. With one fell blow the Jewish Temple, the Jewish city, and the Jewish nation were utterly and forever crushed. And why? Because they knew not the time of their visitation, because they knew not God. "Amen, I say to you," says Christ, "if any man deny Me before men on earth, I will deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

But Rome, you say, knew not the one true God, and resisted Christianity to the death, and yet behold her, God's chosen agent and the mistress of the world! Ah, Brethren, to be chosen by God for the accomplishment of His designs is not always proof of God's favor or God's love. Amid the ruins of the Roman forum stands the arch of Titus, bearing on its sculptured sides the emblems of his eastern victories, but Rome, oh, where is Rome? All her pomp of yesterday is to-day one with Ninive and Tyre. Judge of the nations, spare us yet, lest we forget—lest we forget! How little reckoned they whose genius erected that glorious arch, or whose hands outlined its graceful symmetry, that they therein embodied a lasting monumental proof of God's supremacy, of Christ's divinity, and of the evanescence of purely earthly glory! The Rome of Titus and Vespasian lies to-day beneath the feet of Christian Rome, because she acknowledged not the God of her

fathers, Lord of her far-famed battle-line, beneath whose awful hand she held dominion over palm and pine—because she knew not the day of her visitation —because she knew not God. Victories and triumphal fame that are of the earth earthly are subject to the earthly condition of decay, but the glory of God's heroes stands forever. The captains and the kings depart, but still stands that ancient sacrifice, an humble and a contrite heart. When Alexander and Napoleon shall have become unmeaning words, the lowly saints of God will still be able to count by thousands the worshippers at their shrines. Lord God of hosts, be with us yet, lest we forget—lest we forget!

The Spaniard's cruel policy of pillage in his colonies called down God's wrath and raised up this mighty republic to be His avenger. To Dewey more than any other under God belongs the credit of that glorious achievement, and right worthy is he of the magnificent triumph he receives and the laurels the nation places on his brow. Like all great Christian men of noble deeds, especially who have seen the Almighty in the fury of the elements and heard Him amid the roar of battle, our Admiral is deeply imbued with the consciousness of God's omnipotence; but how many, think you, of the mighty throng that passed beneath that Fifth Avenue model of Titus' arch gave a single thought to the God of nations or that monument's possible significance? Listen as closely as you might, it is doubtful if amid the popular acclaim you could have caught the faintest echo

of the Psalmist's prayer: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory." But if, as doubtless is the case, it were unreasonable to look for such like sentiments on such an occasion, consider us in our cooler moments, and you will find that as a nation, alas! we do forget, unhappily we do forget. Such all-absorbing interests have our farms and merchandise become, that they serve to-day among our critics as a byword and reproach. More lavishly than ever before the beeves and fatlings have been killed and the Lord's banquet more sumptuously prepared, but take a census of our people and see how many respond to His repeated invitations. Where much is given, much will be exacted. At Abraham's prayer and for the sake of ten just men God would have spared the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. Are we quite sure the Lord will never find in us proportionate iniquity? Moral degeneracy is sure to follow on our refusal to listen to God's messengers. What a commentary it is on our decaying Christianity that even a civil governor feels called upon to raise his voice in solemn protest! And even such Christianity as we have is in great part so diluted with worldliness and unbelief that on analysis we find the residue but little better than rankest Paganism. Witness the hundreds and thousands of sectarian churches utterly deserted, or, if used at all, frequented for their social rather than their religious attractions. Read the sermons preached therein and learn how very odious Christ's Gospel has become, how popular the gospel of the world and even of

Antichrist. Blame not the preachers; 'tis useless to break the bread of life when men have lost their appetite. The real culprits were the original mutineers on Peter's bark—the authors of religious privateering and piracy. That bark was moored while Jesus taught; they weighed anchor only when He ordered them to let down their nets for a draught. Though progressive in her methods, the Church in her teaching is necessarily conservative. The so-called reformers, on the contrary, hauled up the anchor of conservatism, and drifting, suffered shipwreck of their faith. Their followers to-day are only nominally Christian. The natural part of Christianity—humanitarianism—remains, but the supernatural virtues are practically unknown. Purely natural virtue will never save a soul, much less a people, from God's anger. Herein among other respects our nation much resembles the ancient Romans. They had many good and noble traits, but the patrician's religion was culture and refinement, while the worship of the gods was left to freedmen and to slaves. Lax marriage laws resulted in the degradation of their womankind and the shattering of the nation's corner-stone—the family. Verily, at no distant day, America bids fair to out-Roman the Romans, for, over and above the other evils we have copied from her, we have accomplished a dangerous something Rome never attempted—the divorce of religion and education. But the acme of Rome's guilt was her hostility to Christianity. For that, God crushed her, and so suddenly that Vespasian, with all his glory,

was the last of the Cæsars. We have to-day no reeking amphitheatre wet with the blood of martyrs, no Christians buried alive in catacombs, nor edicts against the preaching of Christ crucified, but a more subtle and dangerous warfare is being waged by science and agnosticism against Christ and His Church, against the Bible, against man's immortality, and against Christ's divinity. Ah, God does not change; given the same cause, He will be avenged as in the past, and even now perhaps He is arming our conqueror. Judge of the nations, spare us yet, lest we forget—lest we forget.

Brethren, in the Rome of Nero and Vespasian there was a little band of Catholics, with Peter at their head, who, had they been permitted, could have saved the empire; aye, and they did save and Christianize the remnants of it later under Constantine. In America to-day that ancient Church carries on her heaven-appointed work. Her detractors regard her with suspicion, call her the republic's greatest enemy, and seek to compass her destruction, as Nero did to Peter and his followers, as Herod did to Christ. She is reproached with being able to appeal to the illiterate only and the poor—a calumny refuted by every page of history. Her especial solicitude for the lower strata of society is proof of her divinity, for she was sent to preach the Gospel to the poor by Him who resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. Her sphere of activity in our land is one of paramount importance, and one that she alone can fill. Our vast domain is peopled with

representatives from every clime, and to them the Catholic Church alone can speak in their mother-tongue the tenets of Christianity and the principles of good American citizenship. Take this venerable Church as an example. In the Sunday-school are thirteen hundred little ones of seven different nationalities, and though to many of their parents English is an unknown tongue, yet each Sunday you will find the children here learning from the same Catechism those eternal truths which in time will make them devoted Christians and loyal Americans. This is but an instance among many of the Church's works. Her chiefest claim to recognition, however, is that between Catholicism and infidelity there is no permanent abiding-place. Forego but one iota of her infallible definitions, and inexorable logic will force you eventually into indifference or absolute unbelief. The invitation, therefore, to the marriage-feast in our day, and always, is in reality a call to embrace the Catholic faith. On that issue America will be judged, and because we love her and wish her length of days, therefore do we desire to see America Catholic. While God is humbling or destroying the nations that reject or persecute His messenger, the one true Church, we want America to hearken to her voice and take a place at the very head of the Lord's banquet-board. When the gracious Host comes in to see His guests He will find, we trust, America clad, not in the variegated and tattered rags of a spurious Christianity, but in the seamless wedding-garb of Catholicity. If the voice of

history is true—and who will dare deny it?—on our fidelity to God and His Christ and Christ's true Church depends the permanency of our republican institutions. God Himself affirms it in Deuteronomy xxviii., and His words are as true of us to-day as they were of Israel: "If thou wilt hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to do and keep all His commandments, the Lord thy God will make thee higher than all the nations on the earth; but if thou wilt not hear the Lord thy God, to do and keep all His commandments, the Lord thy God will bring upon thee a nation from afar and from the uttermost ends of the earth to destroy thee."

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